Mediascene

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CRIME & VIOLENCE!

A SUPERGRAPHICS PUBLICATION

MEDIASCENE

NOV-DEC. 1973 No. 7

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MEDIASCENE

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EDITORIAL

The shape of things to come: 1974 promises to be an important year for Supergraphics as a number of dynamic changes begin to shape up.

As you've noticed, with this issue *COMIXSCENE* has changed its name to *MEDIASCENE*.

Although essentially the same publication, *MEDIASCENE* will present its readers with a shift of emphasis, spotlighting more film, TV, book and magazine news than appeared previously. So many exciting developments are occurring in each of these areas daily, that we feel compelled to expand our coverage to encompass them all.

This year, *MEDIASCENE* strikes out in bold, new directions that we promise will capture the imagination of every reader!

Our sole purpose is simply this: *to make our readers the most enlightened and informed by revealing more facts, more details, and more pictorials than any other source available today.*

How are we able to accomodate the expansion without sacrificing quality or space devoted to other material? Several solutions come to mind. The quality of course is built-in no matter what direction we take. Many of the areas of interest overlap and it is our intention to correlate, connect, expand and modify them to give readers the complete overview. If more space is required, one possibility that occurs is to publish on a monthly basis. Think about it and let us know!

MEDIASCENE will focus on *all* aspects of action-adventure, science fiction, sword and sorcery, the weird and the supernatural, imaginative literature and high fantasy in its myriad of forms and formats—the cinema, movies and comix, pulps, paperbacks, TV and hardbound books. We promise to present it all as excitingly and informatively as possible—and illuminate it with the kind of extraordinary graphics you've come to expect from us.

Take this issue for example. To mark our second year of publication, we believe we've put together the most ambitious and interesting publication to date. Continuing our policy of thematic structure, this issue of *MEDIASCENE* highlights Crime and Violence.

Don Pendleton, creator of the top-selling Executioner series, gets off the first shot in an exclusive *MEDIASCENE* interview. Pendleton candidly reveals his background, his working methods and the latest developments in the life of the Executioner—and previews a new series character.

Crime novelist Max Collins scores a hit with his feature on the fictional heroes of the field, their authors, and how it all happened—plus a penetrating insight on his own character, Nolan.

Judging by the mail response, readers have given their personal stamp of approval to our layouts on the fabulous pulp magazines of the 30's and 40's. In keeping with the theme of this issue, we've resurrected an even dozen vintage crime pulps to give you an idea of what newsstand browsing was like in the Golden Age. Check 'em out and you'll probably get the same idea we did—that the old pulp avengers like the Spider, The Shadow and the Whisperer are back with us today in the guise of the Penetrator, The Sharpshooter and all the others.

Though a number of books on the market (including my own *History of Comics*) have attempted to describe the pulp era, coverage has been perfunctory due to the sheer volume and range of the subject matter. In the upcoming months, *MEDIASCENE* plans to continue featuring a series of articles on the pulps from the most popular to the rarest—plus a SPECIAL ISSUE devoted exclusively to the ragged-edged magazines, with more cover and interior illustrations than ever before. Don't miss it!

A quick look at our comic, paperback and film news demonstrates the popularity of Crime and Violence in every form of contemporary media. The profusion of police dramas on TV are reminiscent of a similar trend in the 50's, when shows like *Dragnet* were No. 1 in the ratings. Anyone remember Lee Marvin as Lt. Bellinger in *M Squad*?

The book racks are overflowing with paper avengers in every role, from spies to assassins. Meanwhile, the martial arts craze seems to be stemmed by the death of its foremost exponent, Bruce Lee. Perhaps a sure sign that the Karate/Kung Fu trend is waning lies in the fact that the comics are picking up on the idea—as usual, a year behind time.

Clint Eastwood, one of the men who was responsible for the thrust toward violent action entertainment with his appearance in the "Man With No Name" westerns and subsequent films like *Magnum Force*, is profiled in this issue, along with a listing of his films.

To wind up on our features, we're pleased to present a special tribute to the man who personified the private eye and set the pace for every movie tough guy since—the irrepressible Bogart. He played almost every kind of role during his career, from westerns (*The Oklahoma Kid*) to comedies (*Swing Your Lady*), but remains best remembered for his portrayals as a man of violence. Since his death in 1957, Bogey has become a legend with a following that has reached cult proportions—and we must confess, we're one of them. Though Bogart is gone, he is survived by Duke Mantee, Rocky Sullivan, Roy Earle, Sam Spade, Rick Blaine, Philip Marlowe, Dobbs, Dixon Steele, Charlie Allnut, Captain Queeg and a host of others.

MORE MEDIASCENE NEWS: Paperbacks and comics are bigger and better than ever in Europe. After over twenty years with no American comics or strips (and little of their own), Germany has opened up its market, which promises to be one of the biggest on the continent. A single publishing company in France turns out more science-fiction paperbacks than the entire American output assembled.

During a month's tour of Europe, it was with considerable interest that we viewed the reaction with which our publications were received. A number of publishers responded with offers to reprint material for their audiences. Editors nodded their approval. Readers in general gave their acceptance.

[redacted] began to study the possibilities of marketing our publications overseas after realizing the potential, and are currently working out the details for *MEDIASCENE* to be published on an international basis. We'll keep you posted.

The European attitude about commercial art is diametrically opposed to the American outlook. Having a heritage of art as part of their lifestyle perhaps permits Europeans to view art for art's sake, whether it be classical or cartoon. Hardly a surprise, considering the fact that other American art forms, like jazz and the motion picture film, were first embraced by European culture, long before they were here in the States.

Comic art is no different.

It'll take time, of course. But eventually even comic books and strips will be considered a legitimate part of our culture. Hopefully, *MEDIASCENE* will help that possibility become a reality.

While we're on the subject, we'd like to mention that a forthcoming issue of *MEDIASCENE* will detail our European trip (replete with photos of course)—from Lucca, Italy where we exhibited our work and publications for over 80,000 spectators, to Marvel's London offices. You'll meet illustrators like Victor de la Fuente (Haztur), Phillipe Druillet (Lone Sloane), Robert Gigi (Scarlet Dream), Jean-Pierre Dionnet (Pilote), Esteban Maroto (Five for Infinity), Gotlib (Pilote), Mordillo (Lui, Oui), Zinkko (Colors), Jean Giraud (Lt. Blueberry), Fershid Bharucha (Pilote), the irrepressible Hugo Pratt and dozens of others—a full report on the European Comic Scene.

The paper shortage is delivering a devasting blow to the publishing business all over the world. At Supergraphics, our problems have been negligible, but the shortage is closing in as the paper supplies dwindle. Our suggestion to readers who want to insure getting *MEDIASCENE*—subscribe. All subscribers will be given priority consideration if shortage, paper-saving runs become mandatory. In the meantime, we've taken steps to see that subscription issues get to you faster. So subscribe now—don't miss out!

Before we wrap it up, we'd like to call your attention to what we believe is the most interesting package we've ever turned out—THE SUPERGIRLS. We've been discussing the project of a pin-up calendar since we published the *History of Comics Calendar* the previous year.

After considering a host of possible formats, styles and themes, we selected THE SUPERGIRLS concept—a dozen beautiful and sexy pin-ups in super-heroine garb! Power, we felt, could be split between the traditional and the action figure—embellished with as much (or as little) costume as necessary. It sounded like a hot item.

To get the full range of tone, of light and shadow, of texture, it was decided that the renderings would be drawn on board with pencil, a medium seldom used, which we felt would be one of the most interesting and compellingly lifelike. The colors were selected to get the maximum dynamic graphic effect.

When the job was finally printed, even we were surprised—and gratified, because the care taken during the calendar's execution paid off handsomely. Needless to say, we're more than pleased with this product, which we feel will become a collector's item in the near future. Coming up next—*The Encyclopedia of Super Heroes*.

Incidentally, THE SUPERGIRLS is the kind of project that Supergraphics was created for—a specialty item run in a limited quantity for a select audience. We're proud of this one and don't mind mentioning it. We believe you'll like it too!

We were so inspired by the project that we decided to build the next issue of *MEDIASCENE* around an all-American institution—The Pin-Up Girl! We've assembled a sumptous portfolio of pin-ups that'll include everything from the girls on the garage walls to the girls in the comics, from September Morn to Torchy!

Hope you'll be on hand to witness our special pictorial on The Pin-Up Girls! We guarantee it'll be a blockbuster!

Till then, take care.

STERANKO

COMING NEXT ISSUE

THE PIN-UP GIRLS

A PICTORIAL SURVEY OF AN AMERICAN PHENOMENON

MEDIASCENE READER'S POLL

As MEDIASCENE starts its second year of publication, the likes, dislikes, and predilections of our readers becomes more important than ever to us. We want to know how MEDIASCENE readers feel about the material presented to them. Your participation in MEDIASCENE, by letting us know what you want, is vital. By filling out this MEDIASCENE READERS POLL, we hope to determine what our readers like and want to see. Help us to help you! Check the box indicating your opinion concerning the material in this issue, and the ideas below, cut out the column and send it to us, along with any other opinions you may have about MEDIASCENE to:

MEDIASCENE READER'S POLL
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YES	NO	
☐	☐	Cover
☐	☐	Max Collin's article
☐	☐	Eastwood profile
☐	☐	[illegible]
☐	☐	Marvel News
☐	☐	Bogart Centerspread
☐	☐	Pendleton interview
☐	☐	Crime pulps
☐	☐	Media News
☐	☐	Mainstream News
☐	☐	Crime News
☐	☐	Western News
☐	☐	Sci-Fi News
☐	☐	Back Cover
☐	☐	Title change

The material you'll see in future issues of MEDIASCENE will reflect the results of this poll. We need your opinions and ideas to keep MEDIASCENE the best publication of its kind. Please indicate whether or not you want to see more of the following:

YES	NO	
☐	☐	In-depth articles
☐	☐	Interviews
☐	☐	Film news
☐	☐	[illegible]
☐	☐	Science Fiction
☐	☐	Crime and violence
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☐	☐	Illustrations
☐	☐	Comics
☐	☐	TV news
☐	☐	Nostalgia
☐	☐	Pulps
☐	☐	Monsters
☐	☐	Disney
☐	☐	Paperback covers
☐	☐	Comic covers
☐	☐	Personality profiles
☐	☐	Color
☐	☐	More pages
☐	☐	Text
☐	☐	Undergrounds
☐	☐	Movie stills
☐	☐	Music news
☐	☐	Convention reports

Other comments: _____

COMIXSCENE BACK ISSUES

For a limited time only, we have a quantity of back issues available, but our stock is rapidly running out! If you are missing any of the early issues of COMIXSCENE, now is the time to get them! Use the order form on this page.

● When subscribing to *MEDIASCENE* or ordering Supergraphics products, please follow the procedure outlined below: Subscribe to *MEDIASCENE* for a single issue or a year only--DO NOT SEND FOR ODD ISSUES. Subscriptions begin with the issue in production, not with previous issues. Single issues .75 - Six issue subscription $4.00. Back issues of *COMIXSCENE* are available. See order form.

● FOREIGN SUBSCRIPTIONS. Our mailing process does not allow for *MEDIASCENE* subscriptions outside the USA. Due to the high cost of mailing and special handling, an additional $2.00 charge per 6 issues must accompany each foreign subscription.

USE THE ORDER FORM when ordering Supergraphics products. If you don't wish to cut up the issue, make a photo copy of the form and fill it in--or write out your complete name and address on a separate piece of paper for EACH product ordered.

● IMPORTANT. Print or type your name and address CLEARLY, and be sure to include your ZIP CODE. Unclear addresses and zips can only result in your order being lost in the mails. Insure your order by giving us clear and concise information.

Before we forget, we recently unearthed a promotional publication on our projected strip, O'RYANN. Only several hundred copies remain of this 16-page book which summarizes the O'Ryann epic and tells how the concept was developed. Graphics include a series of lead-up approaches to the subject, pin-ups of the main characters and the controversial splash page which resulted in Marvel rejecting the strip for publication. *O'RYANN* is outrageously priced at $3.00 plus .25 postage and handling for those of you completists who have dollars to burn.

HOW TO ORDER SUPERGRAPHICS PRODUCTS!

Use the order forms below to furnish the information needed to mail you the products you want. Check the boxes to indicate the material you are ordering. Add the amounts listed and write in the total on the line furnished. PRINT your name and address CLEARLY and include your zip code number. FIll out separate forms for the groupings listed below.

FOREIGN ORDERS (including Canada): In U.S. funds only. All orders outside U.S.A., add .25 postage and handling for each package ordered.

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- ☐ Encyclopedia of Heroes - Vol. 1 $3.00 plus .25 postage
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- ☐ Encyclopedia of Heroes - Vol. 3 $3.00 plus .25 postage
- ☐ All three of the above books $7.50 -- we pay postage
- ☐ History of Comics - Vol. 1 $4.00 plus .25 postage
- ☐ History of Comics - Vol. 2 $4.00 plus .40 postage
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- ☐ Onyx Calendar (Onyx) $1.75 plus .25 postage
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OTHER

- ☐ Supergirls Calendar $3.50 plus .50 postage
- ☐ MediaScene subscription $4.00 for six issues
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- ☐ Comixscene back issues (1) $3.00 (2) (3) (4) (5) $2.00 each (6) $3.50
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Whether he's a private eye, secret agent, professional thief, renegade cop or self-styled executioner out to destroy the Mafia, the "tough guy" hero remains basically the same: a loner who must fight to maintain a personal code of life and death in a violent, crime-filled world. It's been that way since the prototype tough guy—the private eye—was created in the mid-'30s in the pulps, and shows no sign of letting up now in the era of paperback mystery/suspense series.

The private eyes of the pulps broke the necessary ground (like Race Williams, the all-but-forgotten first private eye created by the equally obscure Carroll John Daly in *Black Mask*) and in Dashiell Hammett's Continental Op and Sam Spade and Raymond Chandler's Phillip Marlowe reached levels of literary excellence seldom approached in the field again.

Later tough guys set the trends that ruled the paperback series of the '50s, '60s and '70s—Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer, Ian Fleming's James Bond, Don Pendleton's Executioner and, to a lesser degree, Donald E. Westlake's Parker—and have made the tough guy hero a major figure of the current media scene, influencing films and television as much as the paperback market itself.

But all the really good tough guy heroes of the paperback mystery/suspense series have one thing in common.

They were accidents.

Mickey Spillane needed $1,000 to buy lumber to build a house for his wife and himself. The market had dropped out of comic books, where Spillane had been one of the top writers. He'd tried to do a comic-book private eye ("Mike Danger") but it was rejected, because of the market sag, so he carried the concept to a pulp-type format, another market Spillane had worked in occasionally. He wrote the book in thirty days, got an advance of $1,000 and built his house. Three years later, when the paperback edition of that book, *I, the Jury*, turned into a publishing phenomenon, Spillane came through with a sequel, *My Gun Is Quick*, and Mike Hammer became the biggest of all the series' characters.

Ian Fleming wrote his first novel, *Casino Royale*, to take his mind off "the appalling boredom" of marrying late in life; he said he created James Bond only "to sort of insulate myself against the shock" of marriage at age 43. Fleming certainly had the right background for writing a good thriller—he'd been an intelligence officer during the war and had gone on to be a successful journalist. But when he completed the book he just put it away, didn't even bother sending it to a publisher, feeling ashamed of the "adolescent stuff" he'd written. Finally, a friend read the manuscript and convinced him to submit it.

Once the book was accepted, Fleming quickly began another, using Bond again because that seemed the easiest thing to do. He was following the advice of another friend who'd urged him to complete a second novel before the first one appeared, since "if the first book is a flop, you may lose heart and never write another." And the Bond series began. None were flops.

Donald Hamilton was a longtime writer for the slick magazines and did suspense novels for Dell and Gold Medal and an occasional hardcover. His suspense novels were somewhat in the manner of John D. MacDonald, and Hamilton's biggest success was writing westerns (*The Big Country*), though he continued with a crime or mystery novel for Gold Medal, now and then. In 1960, another of Hamilton's sporadic one-shot suspense novels appeared with Mike Hammer.

Donald E. Westlake was making a name for himself with solid, Hammett-type hardcover mysteries and was beginning to branch out into the comic crime fiction for which he's become famous when he decided to try to break into the paperback original field with a crime novel called *The Hunter*. The lead character was a thief named Parker who single-handedly terrorized a crime syndicate called the Outfit, but is captured at the conclusion by the police. Gold Medal rejected the book, despite Westlake's already considerable reputation. Then, an editor at Pocket Books suggested Westlake change the ending—why not let the thief get away, and do a series on him? *The Hunter* was filmed as *Point Blank* with Lee Marvin in the lead role. Four other Parker books have been made into films, including the recent *The Outfit*; and another, *Deadly Edge*, is set to star Clint Eastwood with Peter Yates of *Bullitt* fame directing.

John D. MacDonald's Travis McGee character was not an accident, exactly, but MacDonald reportedly threw two or three complete novels about the character away before he was satisfied. And MacDonald is the exception who proves the rule—he built a name writing excellent non-series crime novels for over fifteen years before he found a character he cared to stay with for more than one book.

In the mid-'60's Phillip Atlee, after a long string of non-series suspense novels at Dell, moved to Gold Medal and did an espionage novel called *The Green Wound* featuring a guy named Joe Gall in the lead. A few years later, when the Matt Helm books had really begun to take off, Atlee brought the Gall character back for the long-running "Contract" series.

Dan Marlowe, after a short-lived series at Avon in the late '50s and a string of first-rate non-series crime novels at Gold Medal through the '60s, returned to one of his early characters (Drake, a Parker-like thief who first appeared in 1962's *Name of the Game Is Death*) for a sequel called *One Endless Hour* in 1969. A series followed, one entry of which earned the Mystery Writers of America award for best paperback original a few years ago.

And the Executioner series itself was a fluke. Don Pendleton was a writer for Bee-Line Books, doing moderately sleazy erotic fiction for that company. Bee-Line decided to branch out into other areas and came up with the Pinnacle trademark, and released Pendleton's first Executioner book. It was, of course, a smash, and a long series followed—enlivened by the custody battle between Pendleton and Pinnacle over the possession of their child (Pendleton had tried moving the Executioner to Signet). The Executioner books are crude, full of sloppy writing, but there is a raw energy in them found in none of the imitations (many of which are written by writers who are, technically, better than Pendleton).

My own series, at Curtis Books, revolves around an aging, semi-retired thief named Nolan. The books so far have been packaged in a manner that somewhat exploits their partial Mafia background and their very superficial similarity to the Executioner style series so popular at the moment. Nolan is accompanied on his exploits by a young, long-haired comic book freak named Joe. They are an unlikely pair, but they compliment each other well, I think.

Nolan was not envisioned as a series character. He did grow out of my admiration for another series, the Westlake books about the hard-bitten, coldly professional thief Parker (written under one of Westlake's several pseudonyms, Richard Stark). But my thief, Nolan, was an older man, trying to quit the business and having a wry sense of humor about his "tough guy" role. After several false starts (including one full-length novel which I simply ended up throwing away), I devised the following premise: Nolan would engage in "one last job," a bank robbery. But because of various mitigating circumstances would find it necessary to pull the job, not in the company of other seasoned professional criminals, but with a group of young, totally inexperienced amateurs. For that reason, the book was then titled *First and Last Time*. One of Nolan's young cohorts on the job was Joe, who grew out of my own love for comics collecting, and my one-time ambition to be a cartoonist, a character who popped up on a page one day, fully-grown, with no apparent help from me.

When I started out writing the book, I thought the theme was primarily this: the death of the classic tough guy hero. Nolan's death. And on the final page of the original version of what I came to call *Bait Money*, Nolan lay bleeding to death in a gutter, after winning several moral victories.

Everyone who read the book hated the ending—including the agent I approached with the novel. Fortunately, he took pity and consented to try to sell the thing any-

way.

Six months passed and as many publishers rejected the novel.

In the meantime I did another mystery, without Nolan (who was dead, remember?) and finally went back to re-read *Bait Money* and try to see why it wasn't selling.

There were things wrong with it. Some of them I could correct, I decided; others were flaws that I was stuck with—first-novel problems that I guess everybody has. (I say "first novel" even though it took me five or six full-length, totally unpublishable novels before I had reached a level of any sort of competency as a writer; this book was my real first novel—the first remotely publishable one.)

Clearly, though, the ending *was* the major problem. There was humor in the book, and the downbeat nature of the finale seemed out of place. Also, Jon was, in effect, abandoning Nolan, leaving him to die in a gutter, which (as my agent pointed out) "violates the Batman and Robin tradition" Jon had seemed himself in all his young life.

Still, I was reluctant to change the ending. I was afraid I was profaning the "theme" of the novel: that pretentious idea I had that the book was the last word on the classic tough guy's death. And I was afraid I might be asked to write a series about Nolan, and I didn't want that. I felt doing a series about a thief would be too much like Westlake's Parker books and didn't care to be classified as an imitator. Oh, I wanted a series, all right—I wanted to be a professional writer in the worst way (and some people think I've succeeded!) but not as an imitator. No.

Meanwhile, back in New York, an editor at Pyramid Books was playing the role of Fate. He did two things that affected my life greatly: first, he became the seventh editor to reject *Bait Money*; and two, he spilled coffee all over the manuscript.

My agent suggested I have the manuscript re-typed. He felt coffee-stained manuscripts often made a bad psychological impression on editors. And he suggested I take the opportunity to make any improvements I might feel necessary in the book, such as changing that damn ending.

I did. I added an unbent, blackly humorous ending in which Jon saves the severely wounded Nolan and they drive off into the sunset. I also tightened the prose somewhat, and corrected as many of those "first-novel" mistakes as I could.

It sold next time out, to Curtis, who a week later bought my second novel, *Mallory*, as well.

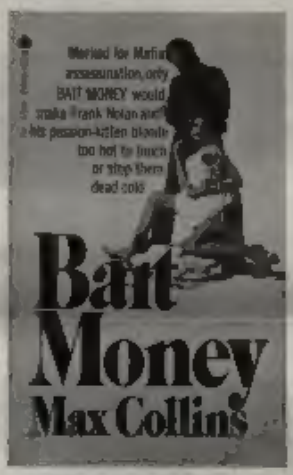
Time, then, to think about a series. Curtis was obviously interested in my stuff, and the smart thing to do would be develop a series out of either Nolan or the other character, Mallory. But neither of my first two novels had been written with a series in mind, and the Mallory character especially seemed impossible to write a series around.

Mallory was the character Curtis wanted.

I got out of it by lying. I said, "Oh, I'm so sorry, I've already started a Nolan sequel."

And Curtis said, "All right, but *then* Mallory."

So I began the second Nolan, *Blood Money*, trying to tie up the loose ends I'd left myself from *Bait Money*. At the close of the first book, Nolan was badly wounded, remember, bleeding a bucket. I healed him—having resurrected him, healing him was no trick. Then Nolan and I disposed of all the bad guys left over from the first book, as well as some sympathetic characters, who seemed to me excess baggage for the possible long haul of a series. I wanted to keep the cast as small and workable as possible. I decided to retain Jon as an equally important major character. This was partially to make my series distinctly different from the Parker books, and because I personally get bored with the tough guy hero if he's on stage constantly. In *Blood Money* Nolan is center-stage less than a third of the time.


Married for Mafia assassination, only BAIT MONEY would make Frank Nolan and his passion-kitten blonde too hot to touch or step them dead cold
Bait Money
Max Collins

After sending *Blood Money* in, I got word from the Curtis editors that I was to get started immediately on the Mallory sequel I'd promised; *that* was to be my series, they reminded me. I realized doing another Mallory would be impossible, and sat down and did it anyway. Somehow it began to work out. I began to see that Mallory could work as a series character.

I was mid-way through the Mallory sequel when my agent called and told me the Curtis editors liked *Blood Money* so much they wanted me to do five more novels on Nolan in the next eleven months. Half of me did cart-wheels of joy (the other half was still thinking about the uncompleted Mallory book waiting out in the other room) and I asked that he negotiate to have the number of novels reduced and the deadline time expanded. We settled on four books in eleven months. Presently, I'm only two and a half months behind deadline.

Anyway, this is where I stand now: seven novels completed (four Nolans, two Mallorys, one other non-series crime novel) and two more Nolans contracted for. French rights sold to Callimard for translations of the Nolans, and they want to see the rest. At least four novels of mine will appear on the stands in '74, and perhaps reprints of *Bait* and *Blood*. And I will most likely be asked to go ahead with the Mallory series as well.

How did I devise a series character, then?

By sitting down and trying to write a good, straight crime novel, and with the best characters I could come up with. I did not "carefully study the market," as some writer's how-to books and magazine articles suggest. I simply loved crime fiction—Hammett, Chandler, Spillane, Westlake, and so many others—and wanted to join the club. But I did not coldly, calculatedly dissect the successful series in the genre and try to hop on any bandwagon.

Which is what is wrong with the crime/mystery paperback field today.

The stands are filled with crime novels. There hasn't been this much tough guy sex-and-violence on the stands since Mickey Spillane and Richard S. Prather first hit it big in the early '50s. Most of the current boom is directly related to the runaway success of the Executioner series; part of it has to do with the *Godfather's* success.

In other words, imitations abound: series characters put together with an eye on the market; books written trying to emulate other books, not out of respect for those books, but out of trying to make a buck. A fast one.

Recently Dell was looking for an Executioner type series, and my agent sent over a novel of mine which is about a hired killer and could have been turned into a series, conceivably. Dell looked at the book, said nice things about it, returned it. It was not the sort of carbon copy thing they had in mind. So Peter McCurtin is doing Dell's entry in the Executioner sweepstakes. He's a good writer, but it's unlikely he'll be able to transcend the Executioner-retread format of the books.

Ron Goulart put it this way: as far as tough guy mysteries are concerned, the paperback publishers want only "killer books" right now.

The same was true in the Spillane boom of the '50s, and the James Bond boom of the '60s: the stands were full of Xerox Mike Hammers, bogus James Bonds. None of the imitations has any staying power; none could build any sort of following at all. But Spillane stands. And Ian Fleming is still widely read. And Don Pendleton is, at least, an innovator of sorts.

And all the really good series characters, the ones who, like people, were *born*, went on to grow and develop, and were not contrived in the sterile computer of some hack writer's mind, those characters will survive.

Maybe Nolan will be one of them.

Maybe not.

But accidents *do* happen.

Max Collins

Max Collins is one of the rare breed of writers who has singled out the crime and violence field in which to make his mark. Tougher to break into than most, that field has already yielded a pair of successes to Collins' credit. Bait Money and Blood Money are the opening chapters in the continuing adventures of Nolan (mistakenly baptized "Frank" Nolan by a careless cover blurb writer).

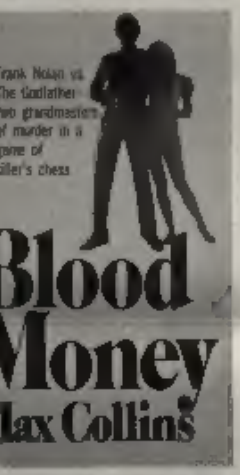
Curtis Books is currently scheduling two more Nolan thrillers, Fly Paper and Hush Money, for publication in mid-1974, besides re-releasing the first two novels. In addition, the first of the Mallory series will be released, giving Collins a heavy score for the year.

A native of Iowa, Collins teaches journalism, creative writing and a literature course at a local college (utilizing as much film and comic book material as he can cram into it), besides charting a world of violence for his protagonists, Nolan and Mallory.

If you notice an occasional reference to comics and their characters in Collins' novels, chalk it up to his lifetime interest in their four-color format.

On a deeper level, you'll discover Collins' literary spirit and style to reflect the visual dynamics and graphic excitement that the comics offer in plenitude—traits inherently manifest in every successful writer from Shakespeare to Spillane.

Starting this issue, Max Collins will be a regular contributor to MEDIASCENE.●



With a splintering crash, a rickety wooden door flies open. From the floor level, we see an enormously tall man silhouetted in the portal. Cutting to a view of the room, we see a filthy-looking man seated behind a battered table. The man at the table and the intruding stranger exchange quiet, yet menacing, words and, with a look of fear on his face, the seated man makes a move for a revolver. A single shot thunders through the room, and over the menacing stranger's shoulder we see the man who was at the table kicking his life out on the packed-dirt floor. Zooming in for a close-up, we see the stranger's revolver, still smoking from the barrel, slowly returned to its holster. The now-empty hand suddenly materializes a match which, lit by a thumbnail, illuminates the crusty garb of the murderous killer. Traveling upward, to close-up with the burning match, we see more filthy clothing and a set of perfectly white teeth clenched around a well-chewed cigarillo. As the light cast by the match rises and falls with the stranger's draw on the cigarillo, a pair of steely-blue eyes surrounded by wrinkles are illuminated, reflecting the burning ember before them—perhaps also reflecting the burning ambition deep inside the man. These are the eyes of the most successful killer in the world. He is known around the world as the Man With No Name, though he has also gone by the alias of Coogan, Hogan, John McBurney, and Harry Callahan. He is the king of the violent cinema. He is Clint Eastwood.

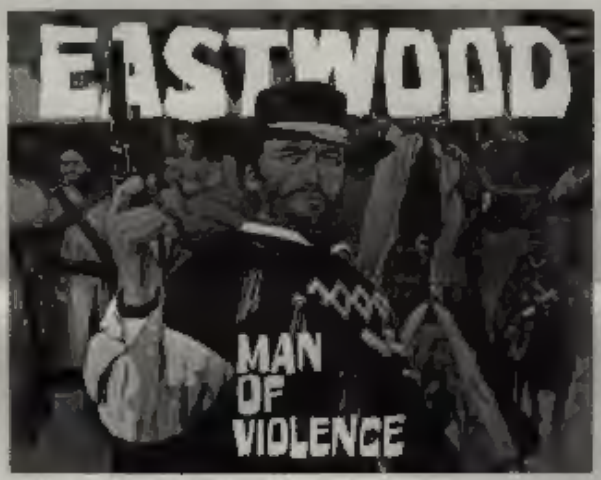
Playing virtually the same scene in nearly a dozen movies, Eastwood always portrays the cool, methodical hunter with the greatest economy of acting possible, becoming the No. 1 boxoffice draw in the film industry. From bit parts in films like William Wellman's *Lafayette Escadrille* in 1958, and the long-running character of Rowdy Yates on TV's *Rawhide*,

Luck has had a great deal to do with Eastwood's success, perhaps more than anything else. The stolid, quietly violent roles associated with Eastwood had been pioneered before by actors such as Glenn Ford in Fritz Lang's 1953 production of *The Big Heat*, Ralph Meeker in Robert Aldrich's 1955 *Kiss Me Deadly* and Alan Ladd in Frank Tuttle's 1942 *This Gun For Hire*. Coincidentally, Terrence Young was putting Sean Connery through the same stolidly grim and violent paces as Eastwood was undergoing, at approximately the same time, in the popular James Bond films. The only difference was that Bond had fast women and unbridled luxury to savort about in while Eastwood only had a horse and a desert.

If any single conscious deed can be attributed to Eastwood's meteoric rise in popularity, it would be his contribution to the creative coupling of Eastwood the actor, to Sergio Leone the director, with Ennio Morricone the composer as the best man.

Recognizing in Eastwood the same screen presence exhibited by Rudolph Valentino, Marlon Brando and James Dean, Leone took bits and pieces from other great films and, combining them with his own natural storytelling skill, produced the "Spaghetti Western" trilogy: *A Fistful of Dollars*, *For a Few Dollars More* and *The Good, The Bad and the Ugly*. This trio of westerns started a vital new trend in the movie-making business, and launched Eastwood's career with a violent and stylistic sendoff.

From George Steven's *Shane*, Leone extracted the essence of controlled yet explicit violence and realism. Robert Wise's *Blood on the Moon*, made in 1948, combined the same violent tensions found in Leone's films, as well as their dirty-fingernail reality. John Sturges' 1960 film, *The Magnificent Seven*, combined the heroism and honor of the western fantasy with gut-shooting realism framed in an extravagant epic of six-gun justice in the face of overwhelming odds. Coincidentally, besides their similar heroic elements, *Seven* and *A Fistful of Dollars* share another trait in that both of them are



derived from Japanese films directed by Akira Kurosawa, *The Magnificent Seven* from *The Seven Samuri* and *A Fistful of Dollars* from *Yojimbo*.

Perhaps the greatest influences on both Leone and Eastwood at the time however was Fred Zinneman's 1952 film, *High Noon*. *High Noon* was practically Leone's textbook in western compositions, settings, mood, atmosphere and the handling of Eastwood's characterizations. Even Dmitri Tiomkin's haunting melodic control of pacing and emotions was emulated by Ennio Morricone in his musical scores for Leone's films, augmented by the unusual and unorthodox sounds of Jew's Harps, sweet potatoes, glockenspiels, harmonicas, anvils, church bells and a fully orchestrated chorus.

Handling Eastwood in much the same way that Zinneman had handled Gary Cooper, Leone kept all traces of emotion and facial expression to a minimum. Symbolism became the key to Eastwood's character.

Sexual symbolism through weaponry was closely matched with extreme close-ups of Eastwood's eyes, depicting the power of the gun as an extension of the power of the man. Even the very fact that the Man With No Name had no name helped symbolize his self-centered security and omnisdent power to deal with any eventuality. Self-content, he neither knew nor cared if anyone knew his name. It was only sufficient that *he* knew.

The character molded by Leone created Eastwood the loner, the hunter, the conqueror; the embodiment of masculine fantasy, using and cherishing women, food, drink, money and justice without depending on any of them. The paragon of male supremacy, Eastwood became the standard toward which his manly audience was drawn. Claustrophobic and intimate close-ups helped draw viewers into the eyes of the man who lived with violence as a way of life. Low angle shots to graphically denote power cropped up in abundance.

Conforming to the growing cynicism of the times, Eastwood's back-shooting, low-kicking and sadistically violent reactionary measures reflected the audiences' desires to rebel against current encroaching social pressures. The symbolism of Eastwood being beaten to a pulp and then rising like a Phoenix with the avenging sword of retribution in hand was combined with the filmgoers' growing morbid predelection for violence in a measure to drive his popularity higher.

Making Eastwood's very lack of acting expressionism an asset, Leone made him a fixed state of order in a storm of violent chaos. Just like anybody else, Eastwood went on rides of petty vengeance in an entirely Machiavellian manner, resolving all disorder, violence and confusion with the ultimate tranquility—Death.

Eastwood's world, as conceived by Leone, relied heavily on the mysticism of the number three. Everything came in threes, a psychological idiosyncracy most exploited in *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*. Entirely devoid of extraneous players, Eastwood's world contained allies, enemies and the unknown, which might throw in with either side. The uncertainty of the third party's presence adding suspense to each situation, creating triangles of death in the climax of each Leone western.

Apparently successful, Leone's directing of Eastwood has struck a responsive chord in American and European audiences, making him a modern day folk-hero in his own time. Never portraying an affluent character, Eastwood is economically attuned to the common man. Ruggedly handsome, he is the typical young American, conceptually suited to American westerns.

Eastwood's career since the advent of the "Spaghetti Westerns" has been almost one continuous adventure of the Man With No Name. Hardly ever expanding beyond the *Dollars* character, he has stolidly, grimly, brutally and violently pummelled his way through films like *Hang 'em High*, *Where Eagles Dare*, *Coogan's Bluff*, *Two Mules For Sister Sara*, *The Beguiled*, *Joe Kidd* and *High Plains Drifter*. His two comedic experiments, *Paint Your Wagon* and *Kelly's Heroes* were propelled more by the "Clint Eastwood reputation" than by the expected violence of his usual roles. Needless to say, the Eastwood stalwarts were disappointed.

Play Misty For Me was Eastwood's first real non-violent success, as well as his premiere directorial effort. Essentially a murder-suspense adventure, *Misty* offered Eastwood in a psychologically-tense setting with his first real attempt at a romantic role. Almost entirely abandoning the Leone characterization, *Misty* offered a different approach for Eastwood, yet its success must be thought of more as a freak occurance rather than a new facet in characterization. Similar projections of character, as in *Paint Your Wagon*, and in direction, as in *Breezy*, have proven to be unqualified failures.

Eastwood's greatest success to date seems to have come from his brutally violent portrayal of the San Francisco Detective Harry Callahan in *Dirty Harry* and *Magnum Force*. In these two films, he continues to exploit his Leone-bred talents as, directing his own action scenes (affectionately called Clintuses, as opposed to Don Siegel's *Siegelisis*), packing in close-ups and violent action aplenty to catch every muscle twitch and emotion-revealing squint. The two *Dirty Harry* films come across like modern day westerns, full of the same immortality, self-seeking plots and six-gun, rather than the traditional detective forces they pretend to be.

The future for Eastwood will no doubt be more of the past. *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot* will return to the tested western theme. The Richard Stark Parker, and George C. Gilman *Edge* series are also looming in the future, with the possibility of directorial work to carry Eastwood into his old age.

And until that old age comes to him, Eastwood will probably continue to wend his violent way through a violent world, fighting the good fight, emerging victorious. The image of Eastwood's tall, lean, muscular character will live on, long after he had swung effortlessly into the saddle and ridden into the flaming sunset of his last film.●

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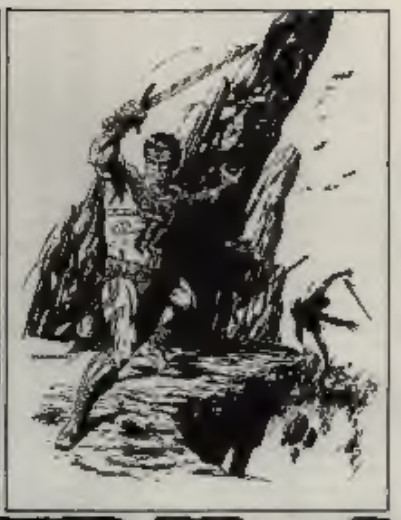

TALON

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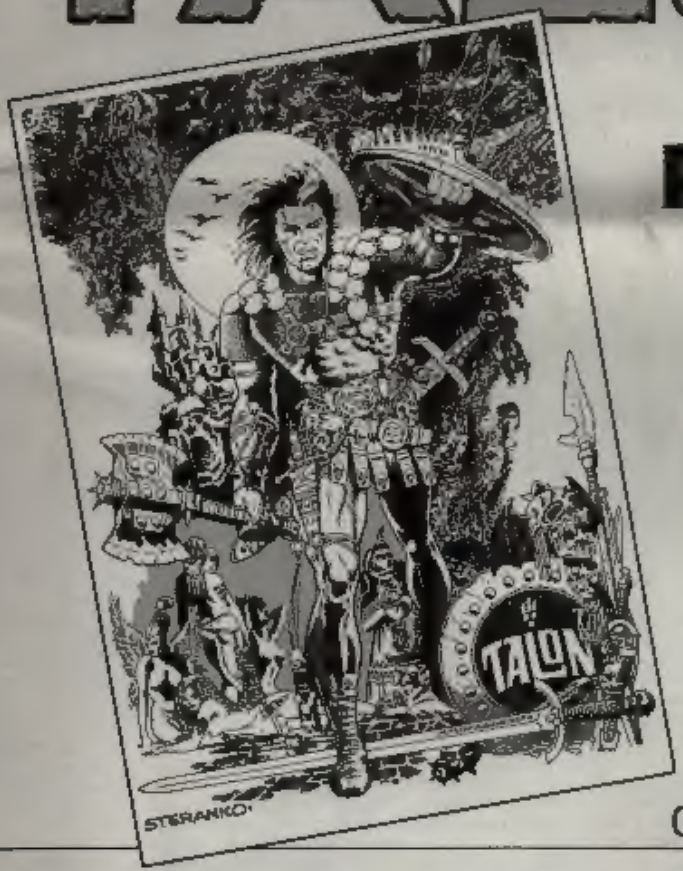

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DON PENDLETON VS THE MAFIA

With crime and violence sweeping the nation's media markets, *MEDIASCENE* is pleased to present this exclusive interview with the genre's top-selling author, Don Pendleton. Pendleton's character, Mack Bolan, has become the prototype hero in the field of contemporary literature, and has been largely responsible for the Niagara of "Mafia-busters" and organized crime fighters that have assailed the country's paperback racks in the last few years. Using the code name *EXECUTIONER*, Bolan and his war against the syndicate has captured the public's imagination with tales of violent action and swift justice, all told with the impact of a .357 Magnum slug.

After setting the pace, Pendleton has led a whirlwind race for success, in competition with dozens of authors, and has so far emerged victorious in a field that quickly exhausts originality. The spark of excitement behind the Executioner's onslaught to strike harder at the Mafia in America and around the world is also evident in our interview with Pendleton as he candidly and openly discusses the motives and ambitions that have brought him success.

Pendleton's approach to writing, like Mickey Spillane's, is dramatically visual, immediate and heroically served up as to tickle the palate of the most jaded reader. In the *Executioner*, the multiple adjectives and spectacularly framed stories are augmented by a solid plot and moralistic dimension that makes for entertaining and enjoyable reading.

The Executioner's adventures have taken him from his premier in Pittsfield to such places as Los Angeles, Palm Springs, Phoenix, Miami, France, England, New York City, Chicago, Las Vegas, Puerto Rico, San Francisco, Boston, Washington DC and Philadelphia. The vividness of detail and extraordinary accuracy of each of these locales reveals careful research by the author and enhances the believeability in the reality of his character, much as Fleming's did in the Bond novels.

The influence of the Executioner is evident on every newsstand, right down to the cover design, as imitation after imitation sports a small illustration of a man holding a gun in a clenched fist while an action scene takes place on the lower third of the cover.

The formula of guns, girls, death, destruction and organized crime has become the order of the day in the publishing field and everyone seems to be watching the Executioner to see them for their next move.

The secret of Pendleton's success may lie in his obvious commitment to his character, and in what transpires during the novels. The hero image is strong in his writing, combining the dragon slaying of St. George with the futility of Don Quixote's thrashing at windmills. Pendleton's hero suffers, bleeds, lives and works alone against the organization that apparently doesn't even exist, the Mafia.

The trappings of reality make the Executioner come alive to the reader in fast-paced, well-told tales of violent retribution. When Bolan is using a bazooka, every working detail is painfully accurate, just as it is with each gun, knife, explosive or gas described. Even the hierarchy of the Mafia is described in vividly picturesque terms, with just the proper amount of *Capo dei tutti capis* making the network of underground crime seethe with an evil life.

Virtually the backbone of the Pinnacle publishing company in its early days, the *Executioner* went on to establish the reputation of both himself and the company he represented. Lately however, success has proven difficult for the two elements, publisher and author, to continue the association, making the fifteenth *Executioner* novel, *Panic in Philly*, Pendleton's last for Pinnacle in '73.

A sixteenth novel, *Sicilian Slaughter*, written by Jim Peterson, was announced, but its distribution was delayed while Pendleton's claim concerning copyright ownership was being investigated.

Pendleton was enthusiastic about discussing his life, his work and the character that continues to be the buying public's choice as the No. 1 "hit" man. His interview is full of information and insight that will help readers understand exactly how and why the *Executioner* is so successful while so many others are a mere shadow of the giant. ● ● ●

MEDIASCENE: Don, it seems as though your Executioner writing reflects an extensive knowledge of all sorts of exotic weaponry, geography and the workings of the Mafia and we can't help but wonder if this is the product of a misspent youth or careful research. Could you enlighten us a bit about your past and the facts that go into the Mack Bolan adventures?

PENDLETON: Everything a writer has ever done, or wanted to do, finds its way into his work. I fled my way into the navy at age 14, (in the early days of WWII) and I haven't gathered much moss since. Aside from 7 years naval service, I've been a railroad telegrapher, overseas radio telegrapher, air traffic controller (FAA), and an aerospace engineer. During the navy era, I served in various bastard outfits, including periods of duty with the merchant fleet, Halsey's Third Fleet, the army, and the marines. We didn't have an Air Force in those days, but I did a stint with the army's AACS also during the immediate postwar era, setting up an air-route traffic control system for trans-Pacific flights. Before that, I spent a couple of the early war years in the Atlantic during the U-boat problem. For the last year of the struggle for the Pacific I was petty officer in charge of a navy landing team, saw combat at Iwo, the Philippines and Okinawa—then led a team of naval scouts to the landing at Tokyo Bay during the formal surrender ceremonies aboard the USS Missouri. I was, by this time, 18 years old. I believe I was the first American to step ashore upon conquered Japan, but there is no documentation of that.

The point of all this is that I do know weapons and martial arts from firsthand experience, geography the same way. I've seen the world from several viewpoints and at several different times, and generally liked what I saw. In later years, as a civilian, I lived and worked all over this country, and I haven't quit traveling yet.

As for the Mafia, I rely primarily on scholarly research—the extent of which you would not believe. I began building a file in 1967, composed mostly of newspaper and magazine articles. After the first book was published I began receiving unsolicited "intelligence" from various readers. For the past couple of years, I have employed a full-time researcher to gather and distill information about the mob. We also do constant research on weapons, their capabilities and characteristics. Sometimes I will visit a "hit site" (Bolan's) just to get the vibrations of the place. I fictionalize all the background material before carrying it into the storylines, of course. But all of the story material in each of the books, with regard to mob operations, is very close to reality—and I imagine that some of these characters recognize themselves from time to time if they are reading the books.

MEDIASCENE: When was the first Executioner novel written and how long did it take to see print?

PENDLETON: The actual writing began during the summer of 1968 and the completed manuscript was submitted to the publisher that fall. The first book was published, almost apologetically it seemed, in April [redacted].

MEDIASCENE: Just how did the character of Mack Bolan form itself? What I mean is, did he just appear one day, full blown as the indestructable Executioner, or did he evolve over a period of time and with careful planning?

PENDLETON: Mack Bolan began developing a very long time ago. For all I know he could be a part of my genetic inheritance. I can find traces of him in everything I wrote, from my first clumsy attempt at writing back in 1937. He became a shadowy reality during the fall of 1967 while I was groping around with a story idea involving a one-man personification of the "holy war" idea. This idea gradually evolved into the storyline of *THE EXECUTIONER: WAR AGAINST THE MAFIA* in a brief outline I submitted to Pinnacle in the summer of 1969. But Bolan is still developing, just as all of us are. He is not the exact same man in Book 15 as he was in Book 1. If I ever get this character fully delineated, then he will be dead and the series will be over.

MEDIASCENE: How do you view the phenomena of the development of the saga of the *Executioner*? After 15 books, isn't it pretty easy to write oneself into a corner, having explored most of the possibilities and situations inherent to the Mafia-busting characters?

PENDLETON: I believe this points up one of the mistakes made by so many writers who are trying to establish continuing characters. They develop their character and then wrap him in plastic. The guy never grows. This isn't realistic, and it's impossible to keep such a character from going stale. I took a sort of offbeat approach in the development of my series. It is done sort of like the old-time serials. There is definite continuity to each sequel. Actually the Executioner series is one long biographical novel chopped up into segments and served out a piece at a time. As such, in my own mind, the full 15-book series as it stands today is actually an unfinished novel comprising, so far, roughly 3,000 pages of print. And my guy Bolan is still growing through his experiences. Of course there are problems inherent in this sort of approach, the largest of which has to do with time factors. So far I have divulged only about a year of Bolan's time. But it has taken me nearly 6 years to do it. I try to keep the stories in "now time." But it doesn't stretch. I've had a lot of mail from readers who point out

that Bolan must have been about 10 years old during the Korean war, so how the hell did he get combat experience there? In another few years, if the series lives that long, I'm going to be getting the same question about Vietnam. It doesn't matter that I have never dated any of the adventures. I tell the stories in now-time and my readers simply do not live in a standing-still universe. It's a minor point, but I do strive for honesty with this character. I want him to be as real as any of his readers, and I don't want to hand these people anything they cannot digest. I'm working on the time factor problem.

MEDIASCENE: The *Executioner's* adventures began to appear at approximately the end of the James Bond era of spy melodrama and just at the beginning of the *Godfather's* tremendous success. Did either of these works by Ian Fleming or Mario Puzo have any sort of effect or influence upon the *Executioner*?

PENDLETON: I am ashamed to admit that I have read neither the Bond books or *The Godfather*. I did pick up one of the James Bond adventures a few years back but never got through it. Ian Fleming is just not my cup of tea. I did see the *Godfather* movie, which I thought was tremendous—with one small reservation. It tended to glorify the Mafia figures, bringing them out as heroes, and they are, without exception, anything but that. Otherwise it was a great movie with a lot of real depth. In full justice to the *Executioner*, I think it should be mentioned that *The Godfather* was published in March of 1969. The first *Executioner* adventure was printed and ready for distribution at that time. There has been absolutely no *Godfather* influence in my work. I doubt seriously that the *Executioner* has even enjoyed any spin-off benefits from *Godfather's* roaring success.

MEDIASCENE: Why do you say that?

PENDLETON: The two works are antithetical. My books are not, of course, primarily concerned with the Mafia. Bolan is absolutely central to each story; the other clowns are just along for the ride, and I give them just enough attention to properly dimension the stories. Bolan would be the same character, doing the same things in the same way, regardless of the identity of "the enemy."

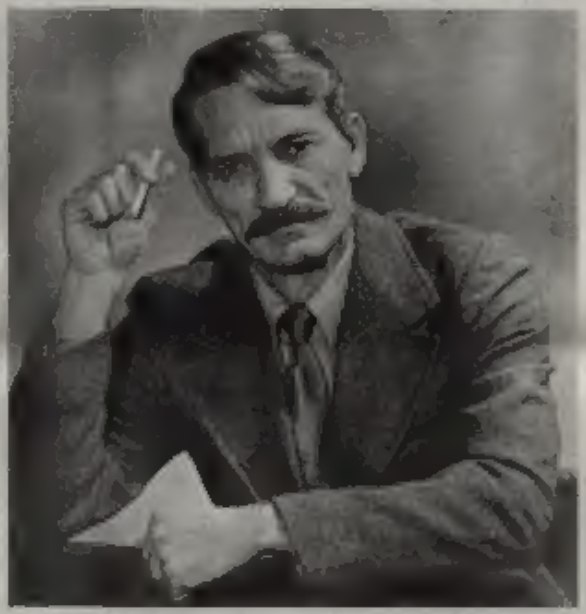
MEDIASCENE: Well then, is there any writer who has influenced or inspired your work?

PENDLETON: If there has been any significant influence upon my work by other novelists then I would have to point to Mickey Spillane. There is a great deal more dimension to Spillane's stuff than most critics credit him with. He was the first to truly popularize the mean-bastard hero who still retained sentimental ideals about the worth of the human experience. Bolan is such a character. I was a very strong Spillane fan during his earlier years and I still believe him to be among the most effective writers on the scene.

MEDIASCENE: Did you foresee the spectacular success that the *Executioner* has enjoyed?

PENDLETON: For various reasons I held very small hopes for the *Executioner's* success, even as late as the end of 1971. Foremost, I was an unknown writer even though I'd had a couple dozen books published before I began the Bolan experience. Coupled with this, I was with a publisher who was brand new to the men's market field. The first *Executioner* was the first Pinnacle book. *MEDIASCENE:* The *Executioner* was a pretty revolutionary type of approach in the publishing field, and so he must have had some problems in the beginning, could you tell us about some of them?

PENDLETON: The competition in this industry is fierce, and that competition begins with the battle for distribution of the product, and display in the retail outlets. The finest book in the world is not going to make it if the buying public never gets to see it. Added to all this was the sober fact that the *Executioner* represented a new genre of fiction. It is not a mystery, not a spy novel, not war (per se), not sci-fi. So what the hell was it? It took us more than a year to come up with a general classification for the series. We now, of course, see "action-adventure" series all over the place—but this wasn't the case in 1969.



I am not claiming to have pioneered a new idea in literature. There was originality enough, though, to make one hell of a burden in getting the work before the public. Can you imagine how discouraging it can be for an author to walk into a paperback store and search for his pitiful little entry in a field of about 10,000 competitive titles? The *Executioner* had been in print for nearly a year before I first spotted one in a bookstore. No, I did not foresee the fantastic success this series is having. I still sometimes find myself wondering if it is all a dream.

MEDIASCENE: Your writing has the polish to it to indicate that you have been working at your trade for a number of years. What are some of the other novels you have written and have many been under pseudonyms?

PENDLETON: I first began an all-out assault on the writing markets in the spring of '67. At the time I was a management-level engineer in the aerospace industry, and making a hell of a good living. My work had been important, interesting, rewarding. But I guess some people are just born to write, and that's what I wanted to do with what was left of my life. I had moon-lighted a bunch of short stories and a few one-shot novels under the pseudonym of Stephan Gregory, the earnings from which wouldn't even pay the taxes on a year of my regular income. But I had this fire in my gut, a lot of self-confidence and a hell of a good woman urging me on. So I "retired" from missiles and moonshots at the age of 30 and put it all on the line with my typewriter. I churned out about a dozen Stephan Gregory books during the latter half of that year, hitting the little markets and "making it" on sheer quantity, then got my first break with a serious novel in early 1968. This was *Revolt!*—a futuristic race-war thing which I authored under my own name. I left Stephan Gregory with the receding past, then, and went on to *The Olympians* and from there into the first *Executioner*. Contemporary with the *Executioner* books are *Cataclysm: The Day The World Died; The Guns Of Terra 10; 1999: Population Doomsday* plus two more that I did as Dan Britain: *The Godmakers* and *Civil War II: The Day It Finally Happened*. I have done nothing but *Executioners* since they really began busting the markets in late 1971.

MEDIASCENE: About how long does it take you to knock out an *Executioner* novel? Days, weeks, months?

PENDLETON: I have done an *Executioner* in as little as 16 days. A lot depends on how soon the story gets to burning my gut out and how hot the fire gets. I generate a lot of inner excitement when I write.

MEDIASCENE: Sounds as though your writing habits have developed some pretty painful side effects.

PENDLETON: Well I suppose that in a way you are right. Somewhere along the development curve, I have what amounts to an obsession to get the story told and to hell out of my belly. During this period I work around the clock, catnapping, living on snacks and coffee and dying on cigarettes. (I don't touch booze except upon rare social occasions.) This work style can be a bit disruptive to family life but I have a great bunch—the wife and kids understand and respect my idiosyncrasies and they are entirely undemanding. I make it up later, during the post-operative period. I usually take about a month off between books and we all have a ball. That's about the closest I can come to a description of my "writing habits." The research all comes before I actually get into the story. I absorb everything I can about a particular locality. The "story" sort of flows out of that. Once it starts flowing, the research phase is over. This may be a couple days to a couple weeks. I don't force the flow. Once it starts, it's all I can do to hang on.

MEDIASCENE: It seems as though the field of men's adventure, and the sub-division of "Mafia-busting" in particular, is predicated on blood and brutality. Do you see this brutality as a prerequisite element in the adventure literature of today and if so, why?

PENDLETON: I'm going to substitute the word "violence" for "brutality"—primarily because the distinction between these two ideas constitutes the difference between good books and bad ones. Mack Bolan is a very violent dude, right, but he is not a brutal man.

To answer your question, now, yes—violence is a prerequisite to any sort of good literature. Men's adventure yarns do not own the field. Face it, man as a life species is in all truth the meanest bastard in the valley. We did not overcome this planet with love and peace, we conquered it, and against some rather fantastic odds. This story of collective man overcoming every manner of peril in a clearly hostile environment—not only to survive, but to totally dominate all other life species—is the very same story which is retold endlessly in our literature and personalized through the exploits of heroic characters. Think about it even briefly and you will realize that this is true—from Shakespeare to Hugo to Hemingway and at all stops between—the central *drama* of the human experience involves this interplay between man and his competitors. The genre of literature which has become characterized as "men's adventure" simply moves closer to the more elemental forms of competition: survival itself, where only the fittest make it. The point which many concerned humanists fail to perceive is that man is not only a natural competitor—he is indeed the *result* of the fiercest competitions this planet has witnessed. And we are not so far along the trail of evolution that we can realistically

close our eyes to that heritage. Our children continue to be born as savages, not as civilized beings. The civilization of the savage remains a teaching process, culture is acquired, not inherited.

Does it take violence to make an adventure series go? Damn right. But it has to be civilizing violence. The protagonist needs a cause of heroic proportions. He has to be re-enacting the ageless stories which found their beginnings in the flickering of flames at the mouth of a cave where savage warriors gathered to recount the adventures of the hunt, to swap heroic experiences, and to give thanks to the gods that they survived to tell the tale.

Man is a heroic figure. All of us, deep within ourselves, know that we are heroes—even if this is only a shaded knowledge buried within genetic memory. But we are heroes. God bless us, and we still love to hear the reassuring epic tales of valor and victory and to identify ourselves with these heroic moments.

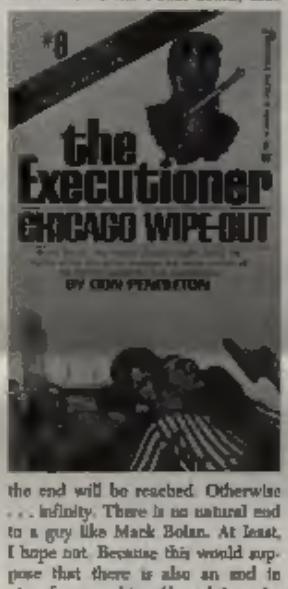
Go back a moment to that distinction between violence and brutality. The brutes, whether man or beast, always represent the full-blown "savage." The hero, the victor, must represent the upward thrust toward full-blown "man-ness." This is not an arbitrary idea. It is true: man has overcome the savage, even though the battle continues. Man—true man—indeed is dominant. We have to keep it that way, and our fiction must keep faith with our truths. Violence, sure—it is what we are made of. Brutality, no—not for the good guys, never—this is what we are trying to stamp out via our violence.

MEDIASCENE: Most of the media of today, films, TV, novels and the other Mafia-fighting books in particular, rely heavily upon sex as an additional sales booster. There are however a few series, the *Executioner* and the *Destroyer* in particular, that use sex as a highlight to the story, yet never allow it to dominate or deter the hero from his main objectives, thereby pushing the violence into the foreground. My question is, why do these books that are heavy on violence and low on sex seem to be doing as well, if not better than those that stress both sex and violence?

PENDLETON: If you are asking with my books in mind, then I can speak. I have always sort of resented the idea that sex and violence somehow goes hand in hand. The idea has been popularized, I think, through dollar philosophies. Publishing is a risky business. A publisher naturally wishes to minimize the risk. People like sex. People also like violence in their literature. It isn't that sex and violence find a natural cohabitation in literature, it's just that popular fiction of recent years has been pandering to what it believes to be the public taste. In my own understanding, Bolan simply doesn't have time for much of a sex life. This guy has it hard, damn hard. It's part of the characterization—these fantastic sacrifices the guy is making in living his ethic. I can't give him too much fun in bed without eroding the high drama of the guy's situation. It just wouldn't be consistent with the character. I'm not prudish about literary sex. Hell, I've written some pretty hard copy in that vein. When I write about sex, though, it is in an entirely different frame of mind than the one in which I approach heroic deeds. You may have noticed also that I don't give Bolan much pleasure of any kind. This guy is *living* the awful truth of survival in a hostile environment.

MEDIASCENE: Has the formula for success just about reached its end as far as the *Executioner* is concerned or do you have bigger and better plans ahead?

PENDLETON: I haven't really used a formula. As for the *Executioner* himself and his continued exploits, I can't presently see any end limit. This is something that will be determined by the realities of the marketplace. When it ceases to be profitable to write the Bolan books, then



the end will be reached. Otherwise . . . infinity. There is no natural end to a guy like Mack Bolan. At least, I hope not. Because this would suppose that there is also an end in view for man himself—and I prefer to think otherwise. My books have, however, spawned a dozen or two imitations which must have believed that there was some formula involved. I don't have to name these. Anyone who has been in a paperback book store in the past year or so will know what I are referring to. I don't resent these books their display space, and certainly I can't resent the writers themselves. They are just guys like me trying to make a buck.

MEDIASCENE: Then you think that many writers, though good, may be limited to a level of mediocrity by the buying public's demand for a particular type of story, thus creating a sort of bland overkill of an otherwise exciting field.

PENDLETON: It is the industry itself that creates this sort of overkill, and you can't realistically blame the industry either. Everybody wants to make a buck. I've made mine, and I don't resent the other guy making his. I do not believe, though, that the formula books will ever make it the way an original does. There has never been more than one Mike Hammer, despite the hundred or so pale shadows that his success has spawned. I believe the same will probably be true of Mack Bolan. This doesn't make me a genius. It simply means that Mack Bolan is an original.

MEDIASCENE: Could you tell us approximately how many issues of the *Executioner* have been sold?

PENDLETON: I wish I knew the answer to this question. At this moment I am asking the courts to answer it. The publisher was proudly spreading the news more than a year ago that there were more than eight million copies in print. This figure should have increased by at least half-again that number by this time. But I have been paid royalties on less than five million copies.

MEDIASCENE: We've all seen the little blurb "a major film series coming" on the *Executioner* books for the last year or two. Just what is developing in the way of this film series, and what are your views?

PENDLETON: A film series has been in the works, it seems, forever. Four Star took an option as early as 1970, but they never were able to get into production. Those were the "tight money" days for Hollywood, and the cash is still a formidable problem for movie-makers. When Four Star's option lapsed Joseph E. Levine's Avco-Embassy Pictures picked up on the series. Levine was highly enthusiastic over the project, but that was 18 months ago and still no picture. Now their time has run out and I understand that the line is forming. I'm going to be very reluctant to okay any more damn options, though. These people may have meant well, but all they've done so far is keep the series buried, as far as movies are concerned. But I'm not at all uptight about the picture angle. A successful movie can do a lot for a book, naturally, but I'm not all that sure that I even want to see Bolan in the movies. I keep remembering Mike Hammer and Matt Helm, and what Hollywood did to those poor bastards. Money is nice, but it's not everything.

MEDIASCENE: Could you tell us the story behind that Jim Peterson *Executioner* novel and why you were thinking of switching publishers.

PENDLETON: Until a short while ago, I was up to my ears in litigation over the whole affair. Pinnacle claimed ownership of Mack Bolan and had contracted Peterson to continue the series. I then made the decision to take my buddy Bolan to another publisher, in this case New American Library/Signet, quite simply because I had lost faith in the original publisher. I even went so far as to file an *amicus curiae* through the Authors League, contending that I had only licensed Pinnacle to publish the Bolan novels.

MEDIASCENE: But you have managed to resolve your disagreements with Pinnacle haven't you?

PENDLETON: Yes, when they (Pinnacle) saw I was going to succeed in changing publishers, a counter-offer came in for a number of books in the quarter-million dollar range. They also conceded a number of points, such as the assignment of copyrights, just to get me and Mack back into the fold. And, hell, I'm a sentimental guy. I took great pride in the fact that a little writer and a little publisher had once teamed to carve a niche for themselves in publishing history.

MEDIASCENE: What's the immediate result of this reconciliation?

PENDLETON: Under my new agreement, I'll be writing four *Executioner* novels in the upcoming year, with more contracted over the next few years. I've also agreed to write a new series, completely different from the *Executioner*. Really off-beat!

MEDIASCENE: Care to tell us about it?

PENDLETON: You see, my agent, Scott Meredith, has a number of projects which I have proposed if there should ever be the time to do them, and with the legal hassle and settlement, I finally think I'll be able to work them in. But to get back to your question, the new series will be about a man known as *The Mystic*. I'll be scripting four of them next year and they'll be a sort of supernatural-adventure.

MEDIASCENE: From Mafia to *The Mystic*, that's quite a change. How [illegible]?

PENDLETON: I've always had an interest in the occult, and have managed to amass quite a wealth of material for plot lines and situations in my head. I think its about time I used them—especially with the public interest in the supernatural.

MEDIASCENE: Can you let us in on a few details about the character?

PENDLETON: Well, I don't want to give away too much, but I will tell you that he's a young law student who becomes involved in a horrible accident. As a result of the accident, he becomes attuned to the supernormal and the supernatural after first discovering the frightening forces developing in him. Like Bolan, he's a character that grows and matures.

MEDIASCENE: What's in the future for you and Bolan?

PENDLETON: More of the same I guess. Bolan certainly won't give up the fight against the Mafia and neither will I. The good guys have to win, right? We owe it to the civilizing process, and we're going to fight on, to the bitter end.●

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MEDIASCENE

Academy Award nominee Michael Anderson has been named as the director of George Pal's mid-January production of Warner Bros. *Doc Savage-Man Of Bronze*. He replaces director Gordon Douglas who was previously announced but forced to withdraw due to conflicting schedule commitments when the film was delayed from a mid-December shooting schedule. Anderson has *Around The World in 80 Days* and *Operation Crossbow* among his credits. George Pal hopes this will be the first of a series based upon the pulp and paperback novels by Kenneth Robeson. His previous films including *War of the Worlds*, *Destination Moon*, *When Worlds Collide*, *Conquest of Space*, *The Power*, and the excellent adventure tale, *Naked Jungle*, will help to ensure proper distribution.

Production of the *Doc Savage* movie has finally begun with the casting just completed. TV Tarzan Ron Ely has been chosen for the role of Doc. Actor Mike Miller has dyed his hair red to portray the unforgettable Monk. A special *MEDIA SCENE* report next issue will detail the rest of the cast and the further production of this popular pulp-hero in his cinematic debut.

Mother [illegible] *Terminal Man* is slated [illegible] release in the upcoming months from Warner. M-M will offer *The Super Cops* the true story of two New York detectives whose exploits [illegible] Oscar for [illegible] *Patton*, [illegible] and Paul Newman and George Kennedy will be on hand for some western action in *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot* from [illegible] with [illegible] for action thriller *The Eiger Sanction*. The best-selling novel *The Eiger Sanction* by Trevanian goes before the cameras at Universal with Paul Newman in the lead for release early next year.

Ralph Bakshi, whose animated blockbusters *Fritz the Cat* and *Heavy Traffic* set new horizons in the cartoon world is currently in need of animators. It seems that Bakshi is committed to some heavy schedules and needs to put on more men to meet his commitments. Currently occupying Bakshi's attention is *Coonskin*, an animated feature with approximately 30 per cent live action. Coming up are, *Hey, Good Looking* and *The American Chronicles*.

Sam Peckinpah is back in the saddle again. Fed up with US producers, unions and film companies Peckinpah has formed his own company and is now in Mexico filming *Bring Me The Head of Alfredo Garcia*, a western thriller about the bloody days of the turn-of-the-century Mexican Revolution. Warren Oates stars.

The Golden Voyage of Sinbad has been temporarily drydocked until February, due primarily to the Christmas release of Walt Disney's *Robin Hood*. The music for this fantasy epic will be done by veteran composer Miklos Rozsa, a name connected with hundreds of great films in the forties and fifties, including *Ben-Hur*, *El Cid* and *Quo Vadis*.

Harry Saltzman and Al Broccoli are touring the world at this time in search of locations for their upcoming James Bond film, *Man With A Golden Gun*. The trail seems to be leading in the direction of Hong Kong for this latest adventure starring Roger Moore.

Rosemary's Baby II is ready for filming at Paramount. Producer William Castle has just returned to the Paramount fold after a long hiatus with a script (by E. D. Richter on hand and expects to start filming this month.

McQ is the new John Wayne flick. Unlike recent Wayne films this one is set in modern times and features Wayne as McQ, a "clean Dirty Harry." Film is slated for a February release from Warners.

Peter Bogdanovich has announced plans to produce and direct *Bugsy*, a cinematic biographical portrait of the notorious gangster Bugsy Siegel. This will be the third film in the last several years based on the mysterious murdered mobster of the 30's and 40's.

John Frankenheimer, director of such films as *Seconds* and the *Manchurian Candidate*, will be returning to the American film world with a trilogy of action-packed movies this year. First to be released will be the adaptation of the play, *The Iceman Cometh* followed by *99* and *44 100B Dead* starring Richard Harris. Finally he expects to do Academy Award winner of 1971 *French Connection II* will be filmed entirely in France with Gene Hackman return[illegible]

[illegible] for all [illegible] films such as *Pebble Enemy*, *Footlight Parade*, *Lady Killer*, *G Men*, *Angels with Dirty Faces*, *The Roaring Twenties*, *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, *White Heat* and the *Man of A Thousand Faces* their star James Cagney will be making a rare public appearance on March 1. He will be accepting the American Film Institute Life Achievement Award on a specially televised banquet, honoring Cagney's acting career and drawing him out of his retreat into private life that began over ten years ago.

Genesis II, the 90 minute TV movie produced by Gene Roddenberry for CBS, may be turning up on ABC as a series next fall. ABC has picked up the option on the property, now that CBS has sunk all the big money into a pilot, and will produce *Genesis* as a 90 minute *Movie of the Week* segment with plans to turn it into a 60 minute weekly series. *a la The Six-Million Dollar Man*.

One of the most expensive blunders in TV history will be coming your way in the near future when you watch ABC's presentation of the *Poseidon Adventure*. When the movie came up for auction CBS and ABC got involved in a bidding war with the result being the ABC acquirement of the film for a one time showing at the price of 3.5 million dollars. The problem arises when the network can only sell 2.7 million dollars worth of commercial time making for an $800,000 loss.

The big winners of the September TV season appear to be the police. *Kojak* brutally pummelled his way into the top ten chart and the Joseph Wambaugh creation, *Police Story* is currently constructing six new scripts for the '74-'75 season while contemplating a change to a 60 minute format.

There is a more than even chance that you will be seeing a *Planet of the Apes* TV show early in 1975. The films virtually wiped out all opposition on ABC and NBC when they were aired and even forced a huddle like John Anderson to pick another date for her special.

Since September virtually dozens of high powered films have been aired on TV in prime time making it unnecessary to go to the movies. Now with the second season beginning, still more current blockbusters are on their way to the small screen. ABC will be offering the broad setting *Cancel the Bail* and *The Eiger* starring Clint Eastwood. Lee van Cleef and Eli Wallach directed by Sergio Leone. Cliff Robertson's Academy Award winning portrayal of a retarded guinea pig for science named Andy Selwyn Perkins in *For Love of Ivy* Woody Allen's Bananas Take arts in *The Boston Strangler*, *Jules and Mary*, *The Only Game in Town*, *What's New Pussycat*, *Lovers and Other Strangers*, *The Magic Christian* and *Hello Dolly*. Sam Peckinpah's *Major Dundee*, *Ride the High Country*, *The Wild Bunch*, *Cross of Iron*, *Bring Me The Head of Alfredo Garcia*, *Straw Dogs*, *The Getaway*, *Junior Bonner*, *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*, *The Ballad of Cable Hogue*, *Major Dundee*, *Bloody Mama*, *The Killer Elite*, *The Deadly Companions*, *Noon Wine*, *The Westerner*, *The Losers*, *Convoy

THE VIOLENT PULPS

They lived in the pulps—a world that came to life between slick, brilliantly colored covers, and cost a dime and had names like *Black Mask*, *G-Men*, *Detective Fiction Weekly*, *Nickle Detective*, *Dime Detective*, *Crime Busters Public Enemy*, *Gang World*, *Clues*, *Famous Detective*, *Black Aces Crack Detective*, *Smashing Detective Double Detective* and even *Triple Detective*.

Theirs was a world of backalleys and shadows, where menace lurked in every doorway. They were like owls who came out to search the city at night for a thousand reasons—and sometimes for no reason at all.

You could find them prowling along rain-slick, mist-shrouded city streets, whiling their way up creaking, fire-escapes, gliding silently through half-open windows, cruising the darkness in powerful autos—or simply waiting for their adversaries to come and get them.

Their weapons were almost always massive 45's or 38's. Sometimes they had no weapons at all, except for a glib tongue and lightning-quick fists.

Their offices were bare. They needed only the essentials—an old scarred flat-top desk, a telephone that rang too often, a bottle of booze in a handy drawer. Names were always on the front door names like Steve Midnight, Mr. Meekler, Cash Wale, Bail-Bond Dodd, Max Latin, Plato O'rion, Jeff Wren, High Price, Rex Sackler, Cellini Smith, O'Hanna, Flashgun Casey, Lester Leith, Race Williams, Philip Marlowe, Sam Spade, Jo Gar, Click Rush, Johnny Fletcher, Jim Strong, Simon Lash and Oliver Quade. They were the hard-boiled detectives, [illegible], cops and private dicks of the pulps. Men as tough as they came!

They rubbed elbows with Bowery bums and uptown businessmen, with crime czars and Congressmen—somehow, their connections were endless.

Their women were always beautiful, knew a little more than they should and always showed up at the wrong moment. They had brassy blondes with upswept hairdos, flaming redheads in tailored suits with too-short skirts, and sultry brunettes in high-heeled pumps and furs. All were silk stockings with seams; stockings that whispered suggestively when legs were crossed. They were women with larceny in their hearts and tiny automatics in their handbags.

Death came in every form imaginable—as a blowtorch, an ice pick, hangman's noose, a vial of acid, a speeding truck, a poisoned drink, a meat hook or a thousand other ways. They handled it the only way they knew how. With bullets. With fists. With maybe nothing but brute force and determination. Teeth were always clenched.

But they always came out on top.

More often than not they had a gimmick. Peter Quest was stricken by blindness at crucial moments and lived in constant terror of his affliction. Nicholas Street was an amnesia victim named after the place where he was found. Dan Holden was a lip reader, having been made deaf by a gunman's bullet. Nat Perry was a hemophiliac private-eye, living in constant dread of bleeding to death should a villain break his skin. Ben Bryn was an infantile paralysis victim who fought crime from the wheels of a muscle-propelled skid, while Calvin Kane limped along, dragging his withered right leg behind him. Other deformed or offbeat detectives riddled the pulps like a plague.

The self appointed Mafia-crushers of today are the aging heroes of yesterday. They go by anonymously descriptive pseudonyms like *The Executioner*, *Destroyer*, *Eliminator*, *Expediter*, *Exterminator*, *Murdermaster*, *Liquidator* and *Inheritor*, reflecting the nearly 70-year old progression of the never-ending profession of crime fighting. They are today's breed of vigilante, filled with cynicism and impatience that was strangely absent in the pulps.

You'll see the oldtimers turn up somewhere now and then. Many of them made their way into the movies. Most of them live only in the memories of a handful of readers who still remember. And, of course, on the outrageous, colorful, now-faded, covers of the magazines called the pulps. ●

Nostalgia freaks will have a field day in the months to come as the craze continues to expand from the 1930's right up to the 1960's. Whether you lived through it and want to jog a few childhood memories, or if you're just plain curious about the paraphernalia of the past the junk that's since become antiques—you'll find it all listed in the books which follow.

Jim Harmon's *Nostalgia Catalogue* covers all the "flash" material from pulps to premiums, with a special emphasis on paper Americana, comics, Big Little Books, pulp magazines, fanzines and even TV Guide. A *MEDIASCENE* contributor, Harmon writes with light-hearted authority and fond recollection as he details the first-hand excitement of opening the small brown box that contained the Tom Mix Mystery Ring, his adventures with the old Johnson Smith catalogue (how *did* they describe all those items on a single page?) and a hundred more experiences.

Published by J. P. TARCHER, the book itself involves the feeling of the 40's, when things somehow looked more colorful and more exciting than they do today.

A more expansive guide to *Collecting Nostalgia* may be found in John Mebane's book with that title, just out from POPULAR LIBRARY. Reading like a textbook on trivia, Mebane covers every aspect of collecting, from Mickey Mouse watches to Coca-Cola artifacts. Treasure-hunters will find listings of values, descriptions, directories of collector's clubs, a selected bibliography and hundreds of illustrations depicting everything from Amos 'n' Andy ashtrays to Zane pottery. A source book for collectors.

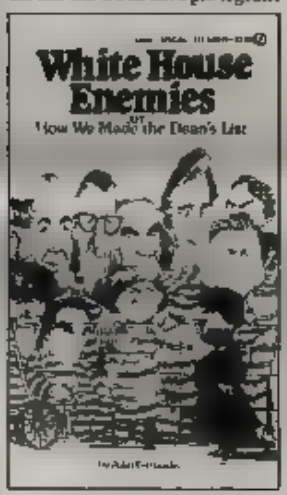
Looking for solid gold memories from the fabulous fifties? Try Jay Berman's *The Fifties Book* from BERKLEY. This all-embracing document recalls the people, places and events of the Fifties with hundreds of photographs and illustrations gleaned and gleamed from the advertisements, films, magazines, newspapers, records and television shows of that gilded age.

This over-sized, "11 x 14" catalog of memories rediscovers the zany innocence of post war prosperity. The longer, lower, wider living and for massive hordes of greased-back, bobby-sox'd fifties buffs.

More nostalgia: AVON SPECIAL EDITIONS has released a pair of books aimed at the continually swelling audience of film buffs. *A Flask of Fields* and *Why A Duck?* are both collections of verbal and visual gems from the films of W. C. Fields and the Marx Brothers. Editor Richard J. Anobile has selected the most memorable bits of business from the most memorable movies by America's crown princes of cinematic comedy.

Still more nostalgia. Ever have an argument about who sponsored *The Shadow* on the radio? Or the names of the actors who portrayed *Amos 'n Andy*? Or who was the announcer on *The Lone Ranger*? Did you know that Richard Widmark starred in radio's *Front Page Farrell*? That Ed Begley played *Charlie Chan* and that Alfred Bester wrote and produced the show? That Billy Halop was *Bobby Benson* and that Chester Morris was *Boston Blackie*?

Remember *Mr. Keen, Tracer of Lost Persons, X Minus One, Allen Jimmy Valentine, Little Orphan Annie, Big Town, Henry Aldrich, Fibber McGee and Molly, Fu Manchu* and *The Fat Man*? Frank Buxton and Bill Owen have put together



the complete reference guide to the Golden Age of Radio, a big 300-page volume from AVON packed from cover to cover with facts about the stars and the supporting casts, theme songs, opening lines, script excerpts and anecdotes on an era past. Invaluable to researchers, nostalgia readers and trivia experts, *The Big Broadcast: 1920-1950* is a welcome addition to every radio buff's library.

Are you at all concerned about the so-called "energy crises?" Do you ever get stuck in traffic jams, or suffer airline delays? If you think things seem to be falling apart now, the downhill spiral of civilization is about to get much worse. And we're not talking about Orwellian fantasies, but rather about the very solid scientific analysis of Robert Vsocs, an Italian computer wizard, systems expert, former professor at Cambridge, MIT, Stanford, who here predicts and describes *The Coming Dark Age*, which by his estimates could begin in 1985. A frightening, convincing hypothesis from [redacted].

Exodus describes the parting of the Red Sea—the Center for Short-Lived Phenomena has reported the draining of Lake Indio. The Old Testament reports plagues such as the rotting of the rivers which was turned to blood and the consequent death of the fish within; the plagues of frogs; the interruption of swarms of insects, pestilence and hail storms; the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The center has monitored the Massachusetts Red Tide, the Malaysian Frog War, the Victorian Mouse Plague, the Brazilian Bee Infestation, the Paraguayan Leaf-Cutting Ant Plague, the Gray Fox Ephootic Canine Distemper, the Managua Earthquake, the Helgafel Volcano, the Lost City Meteorite Fall and the Milan Hail Storm—among others.

None of these in themselves, or taken together, as yet foreshadow the apocalypse, but they should shatter any complacent view of our planet as some sort of cosmic real estate

development which is subsisting tamely to sub-division.

This is the way the authors of *Earth Watch: Notes on a Restless Planet* see our world, through the observations of the global network of correspondents of the Center for Short-Lived Phenomena. Since its establishment in 1965, the Center has chronicled more than 500 events in nature whose abrupt impact ranges from the curious to the disastrous.

Earth Watch, a DOUBLEDAY book by Jean and Daniel Shepard, lists all of these, selecting many for detailed descriptions, and relating them when appropriate to historical, political, and social factors which either contributed to or, in some measure, aggravated their effects.

The Argentine novelist, Julio Cortazar, makes his first appearance on the AVON list with the publication of his novel *62: A Model Kit*. The novel takes its title from chapter 62 of a previous work, *Hopscotch*, to which the character, Morelli, considers writing a novel where the behaviour of his characters would not be governed or explained by conventional psychology. *62: A Model Kit*, despite its thematic suggestion to Hopscotch, is totally self-contained, and it is the novel Morelli would have written.

This month NEW AMERICAN LIBRARY publishes *White House Enemies or How We Made The Dean's List*. Based on John Dean's revelation of the White House "enemies" list author-illustrator Julio Fernandez has caricatured a goodly number of these "enemies" (Joe Namath, Carol Channing, Gregory Peck, George Wallace etc. along with their reactions to this unexpected Nixon honor. Former Senator Eugene McCarthy has written the introduction to the book which also includes a column by Art Buchwald lamenting his exclusion from the list.

Look for a special report on the new filmbooks in the next issue of MEDIASCENE.

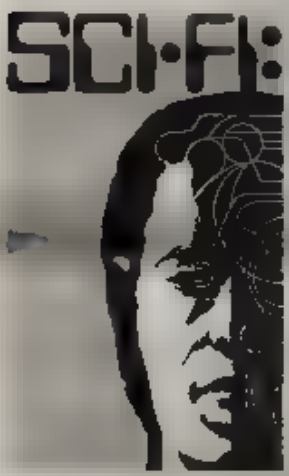
BESTSELLING PAPERBACKS
Nov Dec
Elephants Can Remember
Agatha Christie—Dell 1.95
2 *I'm O.K. You're O.K.*
Thomas A. Harris—Avon 1.95
3 *All Creatures Great And Small*
James Harriot—Bantam 1.75
4 *Semi Tough*
Dan Jenkins—Signet 1.75
5 *Dr. Atkin's Diet Revolution*
Dr. Robert C. Atkins—Bantam 1.95
6 *Rambling Rose*
Calder Willingham—Dell 1.50
7 *Johnny, We Hardly Knew Ye*
Kenneth P. O'Donnell & David Powers—Pocket Books 1.95
8 *The Best and The Brightest*
David Halberstam—Fawcett 1.95

9 *The Making of the Happy Hooker*
Robin Moore—Signet 1.50
10- *Chariots of the Gods*
Erich von Daniken—Bantam 1.95
UP AND COMING BESTSELLERS
1 *The Joy of Cooking*
Irma S. Rombauer & Marion Becker—Signet 7.95
2 *Speak To Me of Love*
Dorothy Eden—Fawcett 1.95
3 *Guinness Book of World Records*
Ross and Norris McWhirter—Bantam 1.50
4 *Adelle Davis Gift Set*
Adelle Davis—Signet 7.20
5 *Papillon*
Henri Charriere—Pocket Books 1.95
6 *5 by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.*
Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.—Dell Gift Set 5.95
7 *Maria*
Baroness Maria von Trapp—Avon 1.50
8 *Who is Julia*
Barbara S. Harris—Popular Library 1.95
9 *J. R. R. Tolkein Gift Set*
J. R. R. Tolkein—Ballantine 5.00
10- *The Super Cops*
L.H. Whittemore—Bantam 1.50

Not since *Stranger In A Strange Land* has there been such thunderous public response to a science fiction novel. Delighting Mainstream and Sci-Fi readers, Robert Heinlein, one of the world's most popular writers of science fiction delivers his longest, most exciting novel ever.

Time Enough For Love is a soaring epic adventure and this capstone volume of Heinlein's Future History Series delineates 20 amazing centuries in the various lives of Lazarus Long, ace explorer of the outer reaches of future space. Bending and boggling the mind, Heinlein explores uncharted territory of imaginative fiction with the exciting machinations, vivid descriptions and the inspired characterizations which have made his previous works science fiction classics. An important new novel from Berkley-Medallion.

DAW books begins the new year with a handful of topline publications headed by *The Book of Fritz Leiber*. In it, the five-time Hugo-winning author discusses his life and interests from his first novel, *Conjure Wife*, to the popular Fafhrd-Mouser



yarns and everything in between.

Also scheduled for January release is John Brunner's *Polymath*, Louis Trimble's *The Bodelan Way*, Michael Shea's *Quest for Simbilis* and a new Cap Kennedy novel, *Enemy Within The Skull*. February releases include *Midrunner Century* by James Blish, *Mindship* by Gerard Conway, Brian Stableford's *The Empty Men*, *The Burrowers Beneath*, *Promised Land* by Brian Stableford, and *Jewel of Jarhen* featuring Cap Kennedy.

DAW's March line-up spotlights the eighth novel in the "Tarnsman of Gor" series by John Norman, *Hunters of Gor*. It continues the saga of Tarl Cabot (previously published by Ballantine) and is replete with interior illustrations. Other releases include Martial-arts expert Robert Lory's *Identity Seven*, Thomas Burnett Swann's *How Are The Mighty Fallen*, and a Cap Kennedy thriller *Seetee Alert*.

DAW has also released Philip Wylie's last book, prophetically titled *The End of the Dream*. A special introduction by John Brunner prefaces Wylie's Doomsday look at the future. Startling and spectacular

PINNACLE BOOKS continues Blade, Jeff Lord's violent sword and sorcery series with *Undying World* as the eighth entry. Also on hand is Dracula's Gold, the newest in this series featuring the master of the undead, written by Robert Lory. Look for their distinctive covers painted by MEDIASCENE reader Harry Bergman. PINNACLE's Horroscope series has just released Robert Lory's *Green Flames of Aries*, a supernatural thriller with a twist of the astrological thrown in.

Recommended reading from AVON is J. T McIntosh's *The Suiciders*, a novel of technological space warfare with an unexpected super weapon: witchcraft. Look for *Assignment Nor Dyren* by Sydney van

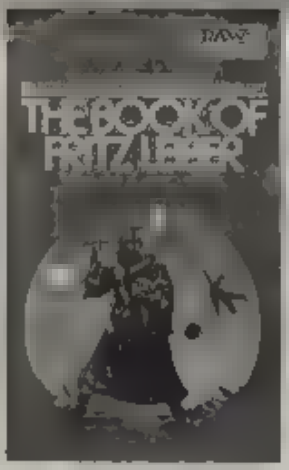
Scyoc also.

Don't you know that God is dying? Colin Kapp's *Patterns of Chaos* from AWARD BOOKS asks the question and builds from there. While you're at it, check out the *Great Time Machine Hoax*, Keith Laumer's wild new novel of time travel adventures. AWARD reprints Jack Finney's chilling *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* this month also.

BALLANTINE BOOKS continues their adult fantasy series with a pair of imaginative releases. Paul Anderson's retelling of *Hrolf Kraki's Saga* brings the great Norse legends of Gods and men back to life in this superb sweeping epic. *People of the Mist*, first published in 1894, is one of H. Rider Haggard's most brilliant works.

BALLANTINE anthologies include Robert Silverberg's *Alpha 4*, the latest collection of SF's most stellar writers. *Jupiter* features ten tales about the largest planet in our solar system by Asimov, Anderson, Blish, Clarke and others. Great reading.

A race of super ants delivers the ultimatum to mankind—adapt or die, in Barry Malzberg's terrifying new novel of ecology gone berserk. It begins when a horde of ants turns a thriving Arizona city into a ghost town and continues to the final confrontation which pits man against the awesome insect civilization. Released by POCKET BOOKS, *Phase IV* has been filmed as a major



motion picture from Paramount starring Nigel Davenport.

ACE BOOKS has released a quartet of Perry Rhodan thrillers (35-38) *Beware the Microbots*, *Man and Monster*, *Epidemic Centers Arise*, and *Projects: Earthmen*. *The Worlds of A.E. van Vogt* and *The Silkie* are also on the racks, as is Fritz Leiber's *Swords Against Death* and *Swords in the Mist*, both reissues for those of you who may have missed them before. The ladies are represented by Andre Norton's *Dark Piper* and Ursula LeGuin's *Wizard of Earthsea*. Of special interest is the *Worlds of Jack Vance*, which features a collection of outstanding tales by the author of *The Dragon Masters* and *The Dying Earth*. Selections include "The King of the Thieves," and two more difficult-to-find Magnus Ridolph stories. Not to be missed.

LEISURE BOOKS is re-publishing Gardner Fox's sword and sorcery epics, *Kothar—Barbarian Swordsman* and *Kothar and The Demon Queen*. Fox creates a fabulous misty world-scape with consummate skill and populates it with sorcerers, dragons, witches and monsters. High fantasy adventure.

UFO expert, Major Donald E Keyhoe builds a convincing case in his new book from DOUBLEDAY entitled *Aliens from Space: The Real Story*. Keyhoe again draws intriguing conclusions about the alien surveillance of our world and speculates on the motives of the beings that control the UFOs.

POPULAR LIBRARY offers a host of good SF reading in the months ahead with Keith Laumer's *Glory Game*, Thomas Scortia's *Artery of Fire* and David Carroll's *The Man Who Folded Himself*. Recommended is the late Anna Kavan's frightening novel, *Ice*, the saga of a new ice-age—a Kafka-like history

about the end of the world.

Renowned S-F author Avram Davidson has recorded the saga of *Ursus of Ultima Thule*, a new release from AVON BOOKS. Swarthy, hairy, ostracized by others of his tribe, Arnten set off to lead a life of proud and lonely independence in his primitive world of Thule—Ultima Thule—where men huddled in animal skins against the arctic cold, and used crude clubs and spears to kill the giant prehistoric animals that roamed the land. But Arnten—"The Bear"—was quicker of body and sharper of mind than his fellow men, and he had a special destiny a path beset with mortal dangers and evil witchery which he must overcome to save himself, his world, his woman, and to conquer the evil one whom they call "The Wolf."

Rich in with weird beauty, mystery and magic, *Ursus of Ultima Thule* is the saga of an Arctic Atlantis steeped in colorful, ancient legend and mythology. Destined to become a favorite of all Avram Davidson fans.

Don't miss MEDIASCENE's big Science Fiction issue coming soon. ●

BANTAM BOOKS has just published one of the most entertaining cops and robbers novel yet. Months on the best-seller charts, L. H. Whittemore's *The Super Cops*, is based on the real escapades of New York City policemen named Dave Greenberg and Bob Hantz. *The Super Cops* follows their adventures as two of the Big Apple's finest, beginning with their exciting and precocious exploits as rookies, and continuing on through the intervening years to their promotion to the detective squad. Along the way, the author energetically unfolds the lives of the two characters in page after page of sometimes hard-hitting, sometimes funny but always revealing narrative, never so much concerned with any over-riding plot or message, as with telling the day-to-day stories of two ambitious and efficient policemen.

McCloud, TV's top Western-Eastern, makes his paperback debut in a novel from AWARD BOOKS this month. The first novel in this new series written by Collin Wilcox pits the plains-bred lawmen against an

underworld contract assassin. Nick Carter is on hand once again to out Bond 007 in a pair of thrillers, *Code Name: Vulture* and *Assignment: Israel*, while John Creasey's first-rate hero sets out to track down crime again in *The Toff and the Old Harry* and *Salute to the Toff*. John Dickson Carr's supernatural chiller, *The Burning Court*, is also back in print. Not to be missed!

A new cop-adventure series is on hand from AWARD this month, titled *The Liquidator*. The first novel, by R. L. Brent, pits tough ex-cop Jake Brand against the Organization who framed him.

Paul Gallico, author of the record-setting *Poseidon Adventure*, is on the stands this month with a new thriller from POPULAR LIBRARY. *The Hand of Mary Constable* combines mysticism and espionage in the hint story of a man whose dead child appears to him at a seance, an event which leads him to betray his country. Well plotted, suspenseful!

POPULAR LIBRARY is also about to release a pair of thrillers featuring detective-lawyer Sam Benedict, played on the TV series in the 60's by Edmond O'Brien. *A Conflict of Interest* and *A Matter of Confidence* by Brad Williams and J. W. Ehrlich provides enough action, suspense and courtroom razzle dazzle to grip any reader.

Interested in great detective fiction without the usual bloodbath? Try the Albert Campion novels by the late Margery Allingham, as competent a crime wordsmith as Christie or Chandler. PENGUIN BOOKS has released *Mr. Campion and Others*, *Mystery Mile* and *More Work For The Undertaker*, a sure-fire trio guaranteed to please all who discover the gentle detective and his strong-armed companions.

"Read the book, see the movie!"

The Defection of A. J. Lewinter is a gem of a thriller that may just become the No. 1 suspense thriller of the year.

"I am a detective in the New York City Transit Police Department!" Dorothy Uhnak lays it on the line in the POCKET BOOKS publication of *Policewoman*.

For more police action, try *Report of the Commissioner*, James Mills' explosive thriller that made the national bestseller lists for over 12 weeks.

If you liked *Murder on the Wild Side*, then Jeff Jacks new novel, *Find The Don's Daughter* is for you. Shep Stone scours the pads and gutters of New York's savage underground world for the daughter of a powerful Mafia Don in this January release from FAWCETT. The fourth Tim Parnell action-suspense novel by Don Smith, *Corsican Takeover*, is also due.

Veteran crime novelist Edward S. Aarons, has chronicled the latest Sam Durrell suspense saga, *Assignment: Ceylon*. The 35th adventure in the long-running series has the CIA trouble-shooter being hunted down by one of his fellow agents—on orders from his own organization.

The XYY man is back again in AVON's new thriller, *The Miniature Frame*. Spider Scott, whose extra "Y" chromosome leads him inevitably to a life of crime, goes straight, at least for the first chapter gets framed and suddenly ghoulish headline

into another high action adventure.

Mickey Spillane readers will find a treat in his latest novel for SIGNET, *The Last Cop Out*. Spillane's new virile and violent protagonist, Gillian Burke is called back to work on the police force after being involved in a frame-up. He blasts his way through an army of killers and beautiful women to even a blood score with the mob. Reads with the impact of a .357 magnum.

BELMONT TOWER continues to riddle the paperback racks with an army of avengers knee-deep in the crime and violence game. The eighth Marksman novel, written by Frank Scarpetta, takes Phillip Magellan and his one-man war against the Mafia to France for the bloodiest action in the series yet. Look for *Stone Killer*. Savage. Explosive! Next month, Magellan returns to France to wipe out a Mafia heroin connection in a book titled Body Count—you'll need an adding machine to count the corpses he leaves in his wake.

Ace crimewriter Dell Shannon has penned another Luis Mendoza mystery for BT. *No Holiday For Crime* thrusts the L.A. Homicide Lieutenant up to his ears in murder set against the sprawling L. A. Airport. *The Lady Takes It All Off* in the tenth of Rod Gray's sizzling series starring Eve Drum, "World's Sexiest Spy." The undercover agent from L.U.S.T. sees most of the action under the covers as she tackles terrorists who plan to blow up the Supreme Court and Congress. Maybe not such a bad idea after all! *Lady In Heat* is next month's selection—a devilish plot that pits the lady Eve against Black Magic and missing missile secrets.

Joe Blaze premieres in February in *The Big Payoff* by Robert Novak. A maverick cop who hates his job and his superiors, Blaze hates criminals even more. Fast-paced!

Peter McCurtin scores again for BT with *The Syndicate*, an organization as evil and corrupt as the Mafia, who want to take up where Hitler left off. Cashing in on the Papillon promotion, Colin Richards has scribed *The Man From Devil's Island*—a sadistic account of the prison hellhole at the edge of the world.

Cherry Delight is back for her ninth caper. *The Jersey Bounce*. This time the Seductioner lands a job as a topless waitress in a Jersey night club and swings into action, fired by a savage power play between an ailing Godfather and a rebel Mafia hood. Next month, Cherry goes East in *Made in Japan*. Fast, funny stuff!

The Sharpshooter is back again in *Blood Bath*, a hard-hitting novel of violence by Bruno Rossi. Johnny Rock, using guns, knives and his bare hands, single-handedly sets out to rip out the black heart of the Mafia. Next month, he returns in *The Worst Way to Die*, invading the Organization's stronghold in the bloodiest climax yet. Gut-wrenching!

Look for a new wave of violence from Japan in the next issue of MEDIASCENE.

1970 was the year that westerns felt the heavy emphasis towards crime and violence. Spearheading the thrust of that movement is PINNACLE's Edge series, George G. Gilman's character is perhaps the most savage killer to be created yet in the field of western fiction—which is certainly the reason for the runaway success of the series. Reading an Edge novel is like picking up the wrong end of a branding iron!

The ninth Edge book, *Bloody Summer* is on the newsstands this month. An army shipment of gold bullion is stolen by a vicious gang of killers who are pursued by both soldiers and Edge. With a heavy reward at stake, Edge tracks down the gunmen to discover the Sioux have found them first—and left them to the feasting vultures. Edge takes off with a vengeance, leaving a wake of death and destruction behind him. Edge is a man without fear, without hope and without a future—an attitude that gives him an edge.

The traditional western approach still flourishes on the paperback racks however. A good example is

SIGNET's *Lord Grizzley* chronologically the second of the Buckskin Man Tales and scheduled to be released as a movie sometime this year. With the skill and style of a master novelist, Frederick Manfred visualizes the legend of Hugh Glass, a spellbinding tale of epic proportions. *Conquering Horse*, *Scarlet Plume*, *King of Spades* and *Riders of Judgement*, the series four remaining novels, are all being republished.

ACE BOOKS double-novel offering this month is Tom West's *Stick On The Draw* and *Double Cross Divero*. Two additional releases include Ross Santee's *Cowboy* and *Nightmare Ranch* by Don Jewison.

Trigger-quick action and hot lead showdowns heat up Al Cody's new western novel, *Winter Range* from *MANOR BOOKS*. Guns and gold greeted Grant Cahill when he drove his wagons into the richest, wildest gold camp in the territory. But it was also a killers' haven that would guarantee that he'd never leave alive.

Muskets on the Mississippi by Matt Harding is a brawling frontier epic played against a richly detailed, authentic 19th Century setting of the old west. Luke Abbott was raised by Indians and struggles to take his place among white settlers—torn between many loyalties and loves. Thundering action from POPULAR LIBRARY.

Some of the finest western cover art can be found on POPULAR LIBRARY's William McLeod Raine novels. Trail drives, winter scenes, cowpunchers and gunhawks all tastefully evoke realistic visions of the kind of west that has made Raine a top best-seller with over five million books in print to his credit.

Readers can expect action, drama and hard-hitting entertainment in Raine's *Yukon Trail*, the lusty saga of Cordon Elliott, U. S. Agent

In *Ranger's Luck*, Raine's hero, Jordan, finds himself pursued by the law who found him with the stolen gold—and by the thieves who stole it. No one was on his side—not even the girl who caught him.

The first thing the Sheriff did was throw him in jail. Then he tried to keep him there. But it was as hard to keep *Jeremiah Painter* caged as it was to kill him—and a lot of men would pay for that knowledge with their lives. *Jeremiah Painter* is George Walk's new novel about a black gunfighter who became a lawman in a town that hated him. Explosive western action with a difference from DELL.

Western author, Lee Leighton has just scripted *Cassidy* for BALLANTINE BOOKS. As a kid, Cassidy had watched helplessly as the big ranchers had castrated and killed his father. Now he was grown, lightning fast with a gun and out for vengeance. For the moment, he let them think he was a hired gun on their side of a range war feud—until he killed them, one by one.

Joe Millard, who scribed the "Man with No Name" paperback thrillers, has completed the second Hec Ramsey novel, *The Hunted*, for AWARD BOOKS. Based on the Richard Boone TV series, this new actioner pits Ramsey against deadly odds in a showdown in Santa Rita, surrounded by an army of hired guns. Millard has also scripted the paperback version of John Wayne's latest western

Film, Cahill: U.S. Marshall.

AWARD kicks off a new violent action series this month with the premiere title, *Hawk*. Web Steele was waiting for the hangman's noose when the law set him free to hunt down the outlaws beyond the reach of justice. Author Dean Owen keeps the blood flowing freely until the final pulse-pounding page!

Bullseying heavily in the western violence field, LEISURE BOOKS is releasing the eleventh Sundance novel by John Benteen, *The Comancheros*. The Comancheros were the most vicious and brutal band of rapists ever to terrify the Southwest. Sundance, the big yellow-haired half-breed, became involved when his best friends were killed and the Comancheros kidnapped their daughter. Vowing vengeance, Sundance planned to infiltrate the gang's remote mountain hideout.

Violence writer Peter McCurtin has penned another adventure in his Carmody series, *Screaming on the Wire*. Carmody liked booze and women, but he loved money too, and would do anything to get his greedy hands on some. That's why he decided to ride north to what looked like a developing range war and hire out his gun. He didn't give a damn which side he was on, as long as it paid well.

Clay Randall, who chronicled the leather-tough adventures of Amos Flagg, is back this month with *The Ocasla Kid*—the name they gave Tragg, the gunhawk who became the judge, jury and executioner fighting against the white-hooded vigilantes before all the settlers on the Cherokee Strip were slaughtered.

BELMONT TOWER has released an armful of blazing western novels this month. L. L. Foreman's *White Apache* is an explosive tale of a man who led the Apaches against his

own people—and had to pay for it when a fast-shooting manhunter got the drop on him.

John Benteen scores his fourteenth hit in the name of Fargo with *Bandolero*. Hot lead action follows Fargo as he runs guns across the Rio Grande to feed the Mexican Revolution—and join up with Pancho Villa. But when he finds himself facing a firing squad armed with his own weapons, all hell breaks loose south of the border. Coming next month, *Wolf's Head*.

The miners and the ranchers were ready to blast each other apart unless Lt. Cultrane could stop them—and when the showdown came, the resolution would be hammered out in blood. Brian Garfield details the violent conflict in his new thriller for BELMONT TOWER, *Valley of the Shadow*.

A pair of western classics are in print again by the king of the frontier novelists, Zane Grey. *The Last Ranger* and *Spirit of the Border* are both high-action dramas set against the background of gunfire and iron men who tamed the lawless west. Twin western thunder!

Adios, amigo, until next issue!●

New books, new sizes and new prices are in store for Marvel in the near future as the material shortages induce experimentation.

The first and most important of the new changes is the overall price increase from 20-cents to 25-cents. This 5-cent price rise will not benefit the reader with more pages of story or art, and is really only a stop-gap measure being utilized until a more equitable solution can be found. In the search for this solution, Marvel will be releasing 35 and 60-cent comics on a trial basis, pending sales returns. The 35-cent books will be spearheaded by two monthly titles with three rotating features. The first book, to be out in a few months, will be titled *Giant Sized Superstars*, featuring a 24-page Fantastic Four epic in which the Hulk

and the Thing trade what little brains they possess. Issue 2 will feature a Ross Andru illustrated Spider-Man tale, guest-starring Morbius and the murderous Man-Wolf. Then, in issue 3, Len Wein takes on a Defenders spectacle with Sal Buscema handling the art. Issue 4 will start the cycle again with the FF.

The other monthly 35-cent books will be titled *Giant-Sized Chillers* and will spotlight 24 pages of Dracula, Werewolf and Man-Thing adventures.

The title of the 60-cent comic has not been definitely settled yet, but it will feature 30 pages of original story on a monthly basis. The first issue will contain a story titled "Spider-Man and Dracula Do Not Meet," which is obliquely tied into the March *Team-Up* story starring the Torch and the X-Men. The 60-cent comic will also contain thrillers with the Avengers and Conan tales drawn by such luminaries as Rich Buckler, Gil Kane, Jim Starlin and others. Needless to say, the 35 and 60-cent giant comics will have a multitude of extra pages to be filled, in addition to the original story pages. Plans call for reprint material right now, with little hope for a change in the future.

Amidst all the shifting and moving around at Marvel, three titles have been tentatively cancelled due to less than spectacular sales and three new books have come to take their places. *The Sub-Mariner*, *Kull the Destroyer* and *Worlds Unknown* have been put on the discontinued titles list, with a *Human Torch*, *Night Rider* and the 60 cent *Super-Giant League of Super Villains* taking their places.

In the Marvel black and white field, Marv Wolfman becomes the editor, exclusive of his other work, and two or more new books will be appearing soon. First off, *Savage Tales* is back on the schedule, hopefully to stay. It seems that the third issue, with the garish Pablo Marcos John Romita painting was just what was needed to spark sales and instigate the continuance of the title. Due out March 28, *Savage Tales* 4 will contain the Roy Thomas/Gil Kane adaptation of "The Dark Man," a Turlogh O'Brien tale converted into a Conan tale.

Issue 5 will present the Thomas/Smith version of "A Witch Shall Be Born," complete with the oft-heralded crucifixion scene, considered a little too rough for the Code approved color Conan book. Roy is rather reluctant to plan further, considering *Savage Tales* past track record.

Yet another magazine that will be appearing from Marvel in the next few months will be *Monsters of the Movies*, a return to the monster magazines of the early 60's, when Mothra and Gorgo stalked the drive-in screens.

A new black and white book, titled *The Deadly Hands of Kung-Fu* will also be appearing soon, attempting to cash in on the current movie trend. Jim Starlin, Al Milgrom and Steve Englehart will be teaming up to produce the black and white antics of Shang-Chi, Master of Kung-Fu, Gerry Conway and Dick Giordano will be producing an ethnic Kung Fu job concerning the "Sons of the Tiger," loosely based on the movie *Enter The Dragon*.

Plans are also underway to acquire the rights to the Godzilla and Planet of the Apes properties, but no contracts have been signed as of this writing.

The Golden Voyage of Sinbad is the title of a movie to be released with much hoopla and fanfare sometime in February. In their search for new markets and outlets, Marvel has acquired the comic rights to this movie and will be releasing a two-part version in conjunction with the movie promotion. Len Wein has written the story, with George Tuska and Vince Colletta illustrating. John Buscema and Ernie Chua were originally assigned to the job, but prior commitments and personal discretion prevented their participation. The two-part saga will appear in the pages of *Worlds Unknown* and will be followed up with the Doug Moench/Rich Buckler creation of a Cyborg character in subsequent issues.

Recently, while gathering research material for his Conan assignments, John Buscema rediscovered the early *Prince Valiant* adventures and was so inspired that he prevailed upon Roy to do a Conan story combining the first Valiant sequence, concerning a fiery dragon and the Perseus legend. This will all be appearing after an issue penciled and inked by Buscema.

It seems as though [illegible] would get his jerkin ruffled in New York, as Jim Starlin can testify. Seems that Jim had done detailed layouts for a Conan tale and abandoned it for just a minute on the way to deliver it. When he came back he discovered that someone had absconded with the big bearded Cimmerian's adventure.

Shang Chi and *Doctor Strange* are being awarded their own titles in the near future and the Iron Fist will be on the stands, drawn and written by Gil Kane and Roy Thomas, in *Marvel Premiere* 15. Issue 14 will see Len Wein and Larry Hama taking over the storyline.

Brother Voodoo will be bowing out of *Strange Tales* with a Doug Moench written tale and moving into *Tales of the Zombie*. The strip's originator, Len Wein, hopes to find the time in his schedule to continue scripting, but his work on a new series, *The Golem*, may prevent it.

Mike Ploog will be chronicling the adventures of the *Man Thing* for a while beginning with a Steve Gerber —written issue 5, titled "Night of the Laughing Death." *Werewolf By Night*, another Ploog—illustrated title will soon begin featuring a two-parter with "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," and don't be too surprised if this is the first appearance of the character as a prelude to a possible series.

Marvel Team-Up will now pursue a policy of featuring Spider-Man every other issue, with various others in the spotlight on alternating months.

Jungle Action 6 will feature an oddity, apart from the Don McGregor/Billy Graham Black Panther tale featuring Lord Carnage. There will be a two page presentation of Coal Tiger, Jack Kirby's original Black Panther concept, complete with half mask and short cape.

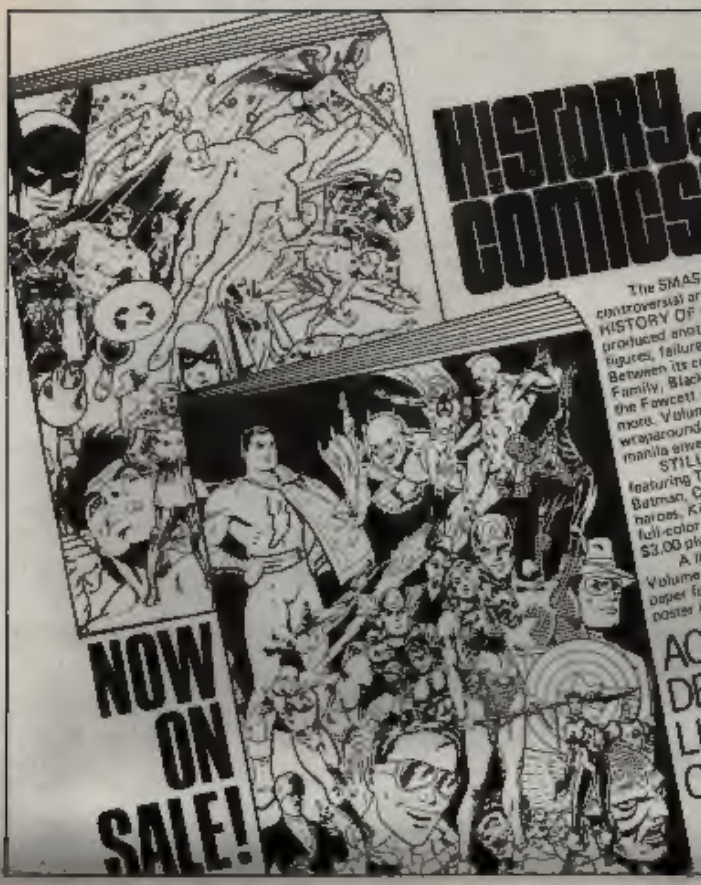
Luke Cage will infiltrate a drug ring in a tale titled "Call Him Gottonmouth," the beginning of a two-parter in which Cage tries to vindicate himself of his original criminal accusations. Then the original Powerman returns to try to punch out Cage for stealing his name—this is a plot? with Ron Wilson, a cover artist for Marvel's English line takes over the art chores.

Tarmon and despair lie in wait for the Defenders as Len Wein and Sal Buscema put them through their paces against the Squadron Sinister and Nebulon. Nighthawk will be [illegible] as Sub-

Mariner will be quitting. Then, a little bit later, Powerman will make an appearance and consider becoming a member. You'll have to watch this series closely, since its eight adventures per year are directly tied into the 24-page tales in *Giant-Size Superstars*.

Look out for the return of the X-Men, in a revamped format in the near future, featuring the FOOM character contest winner Human Sapiens. Neal Adams fans will get to see him do some of his strangest material in an adventure of Howard the Duck, written by Steve Gerber, to run in one of the black and white books.

Current plans at Marvel call for the 25 cent price on comics to be a short term affair soon, to be changed. If the 35 and 60 cent titles succeed, you can be sure of an overall price hike. The reason for this is simply that the current format allows for only 18 real pages of story. A change to 35 cents would allow for a return to 24 pages of story the format that was present ten years ago when comics cost a dime. Meanwhile, the paper shortage that appears to be throttling National, Harvey and Charlton has been coped with by Marvel, and rather than being in serious trouble they are expanding, both in quantity of titles and mid-size—appealing formats.●



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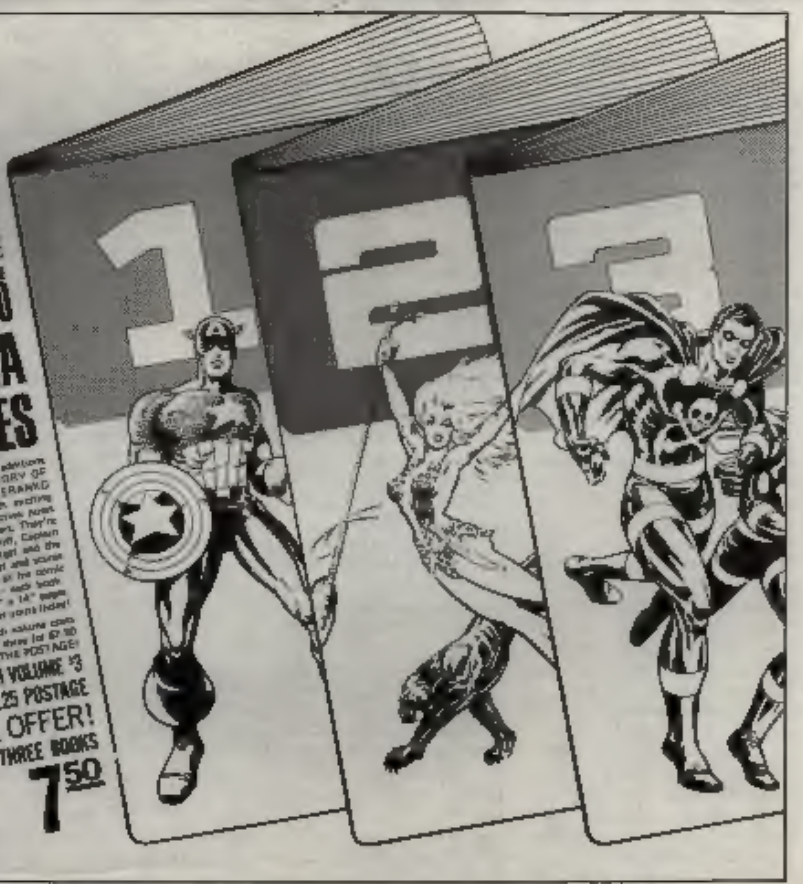

NATIONAL COMICS NEWS

The paper shortage has changed a number of National's books and has motivated them to revamp their line. At this time, plans are being made to publish seven issues a month in the 100-page, 60-cent format. Fifteen issues a month will remain at the 25-page size, which National is continuing to hold at the 20-cent price with twenty pages of new material. Consolidation of a number of the existing titles into multiple-feature packages is also under way, with *Lois Lane*, *Jimmy Olsen* and *Supergirl* all being a part of the new *Superman Family* title, a 100-page bi-monthly.

Among the titles to fall in the wake of the paper crisis are *Prez*, *Champion Sports*, *Dark Mansion*, *Secret Origins*, and *Weird Worlds*. Issues of *Weird Western*, *Black Magic* and *Sinister House* were also pulled off the press in a particularly tight period, but all have been restored to the schedule now that the worst has passed.

In the dollar book department, plans continue to call for six golden age reprints and six character books a year. After some momentary confusion during the initial stages of the paper shortage, the way now seems clear for this project to proceed as planned. It seems that the large size and price are attractive to distributors.

A new Kirby title has been planned for the Summer schedule, featuring another sci-fi oriented approach. This latest character in the Kirby clan of collector's classics will be *O.M.A.C.*, the One Man Army Corps. O.M.A.C., a 31st century super soldier will be replete with bandoleers in this new future war series featuring more far-out Kirby-esque weaponry than usual.

California-based artist D. Bruce Berry will be taking over Mike Royer's chores on all of the Kirby titles, allowing Royer to do more work for Marvel and Gold Key. Berry will be appearing first in an assistance capacity to Royer on *Kamandi*, then moving to full responsibility on the *O.M.A.C.* book and a new Kirby project centered on the kid-gang formula so familiar to Jack. The strip will be much like a humorous version of the old Newsboy Legion, minus the Guardian, and will be titled the *Gingbats*.

The conversion to so many 80-cent titles, each of which will feature between 20 and 40 pages of new material plus special features, has put the National editorial staff a bit behind schedule, since they were not prepared to supply the needed reprint pages on such a tight schedule. Within a month or so after the switch, they solved their problem by utilizing more of their old material, which they are now able to technically reproduce (even if they don't have negatives), as well as the Quality and Fawcett material that they own.

One of the side effects of the fuel shortage has resulted in the curtailing of operations in Metropolis' Superman Land. Things got off to a good, even though somewhat late start this Summer, but have been delayed time and again due to the lack of necessary supplies. The paper shortage contributed its effect as well, diverting the attention of the New York-based crew who could not focus fully on the problems of Metropolis.

Len Wein has just finished revamping the new (again!) *Wonder*

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Woman, wrapping up the loose ends left by Bob Kanigher's short editorial reign. As Julie Schwartz takes over the book, Curt Swan and Tex Blaisdell illustrate the latest examples of the mixed-up Amazon.

Moving on to the *Justice League*, Len plans to schedule a run-in with the Injustice Gang in issue 111 and to revive and redefine the character of Amazo in issue 112, in "War With The One-Man Justice League." Issue 113 will feature the Sandman in "Creature In A Velvet Cage," explaining the character's 1968 reappearance in his original green and purple suit.

The Spectre continues to be the ghost in the spotlight as he stars in an upcoming book-length tale in *Adventure Comics*. Michael Fleisher's script will be pencilled by Frank Thorne and inked by Jim Aparo and will highlight the best traits of both artists. After the epic-length issue, *Adventure* will feature the Spectre in 13-page stories, backed up by Aquaman in a new series of stories by Steve Skeates and new National artist, Mike Grell. The series is obviously hoping to ride on the publicity generated by the *SuperFriends* TV show.

Ross Heath has managed to tear himself away from the fabled city of gusty winds and Playboy bunnies and relocate in New York, working mainly in Joe Kubert's office. Russ is producing *Sgt. Rock* again, as well as a few other jobs for various DC editors. A rather curious-looking Heath tale will be coming up soon in the *Tarzan* 100-pager. It seems that in order to catch up on his Tarzan schedule, and to supply a missing Korak story, Joe Kubert pencilled and inked a 6-page Tarzan tale, then proceeded to pencil a short Korak story as well, leaving the inks for Heath. The finished work bears the slickness and refinement of Heath, combined with Kubert's storytelling and drama. Hopefully more of the same will be forthcoming now that both Heath and Kubert are no longer separated by hundreds of miles and expensive phone calls.

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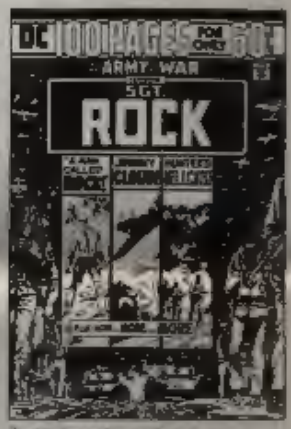
Tony DeZuniga will be dropping out of the National comics picture for a while, perhaps for good. It seems that personal matters have come up and Tony's continuation at National has been curtailed. The door is open however, for him to come in and illustrate stories anytime he wishes. This move also creates problems with the Philippine shop system which Tony managed for National. It became necessary for Nestor Redondo to step in and take over for the time being, adding this responsibility to *Rima* and other comic work.

Perhaps the best news out of National at this time is the appearance of Frank Robbins as the new artist on the *Shadow*. Robbins, whose visual dynamics and mastery of storytelling and comics composition is apparent in his syndicated comic strip *Johnny Hazard*, will be bringing all of his more than 30 years of comic knowledge to the exploits of the Shadow with issue 5 and possibly more later.

Robbins seems to be doing an extraordinary amount of work for National, appearing with increasing regularity in *Plop*, *House of Mystery*, and other Joe Orlando titles, as well as *The Shadow*. Frank has been writing *Batman* tales for years, and recently appears to have regained his interest in drawing sufficiently to turn his talents to the comic book world. Always a prolific artist, Robbins writes, pencils, inks and letters six daily and a Sunday page in a matter of days, and still has the rest of the week to pursue his other interests, in this case, comics. What makes this truly remarkable is that he has been doing it for years and years, rivalling hundreds of other artists and surpassing nearly all with his virtuoso mastery of writing, art, and originality.

Swamp Thing 10 will be the last issue of the series illustrated by Bernie Wrightson. Bernie tendered his resignation without a word of explanation, but was quickly replaced by Philippine artist, Nestor Redondo, whose *Rima* has elicited excellent reactions from his peers.

Len and assistant editor Paul Levitz carefully prepared Redondo for the strip, with Len tailoring the script for issue 11 to suit Redondo's particular talents and preparing a reference file featuring previous issues, character illustrations, and backgrounds. The first of the Wein/Redondo tales is a sequel to "Spectre From The Stalking Swamp" in *Phantom Stranger* which pits the Swamp Thing against "The Cosmic Avenger Worms."



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Issue 12 will feature "The Eternity Man," who is cursed to live in a time circle, living from the beginning to the end of eternity over and over again. In issue 13 the monster is captured and taken to Washington to face a Senate Investigating Committee, who will attempt to discover what he is.

Apparently the worst is over in the paper crisis at National, as the 20-cent, 60-cent and dollar books stabilize and await the returns of their sales figures. Meanwhile, plans still go on for bigger and better books, while artists like Robbins and Redondo step in to watch over the *Shadow* and the *Swamp Thing*. Kubert and Redondo come in with projects like *Rima*, Kirby appears with a new book every few months, and even Russ Heath and Alex Toth showing up with ever-increasing regularity in the war books and *PLOP*.

As long as they last, we will be treated to vintage Toth, Kirby, Meskin, Infantino, and Kubert reprints in the 100-pagers and the dollar books provide the fans with all those glorious comics in a large size. Yes, "Big Things Are Coming From DC In 74!"

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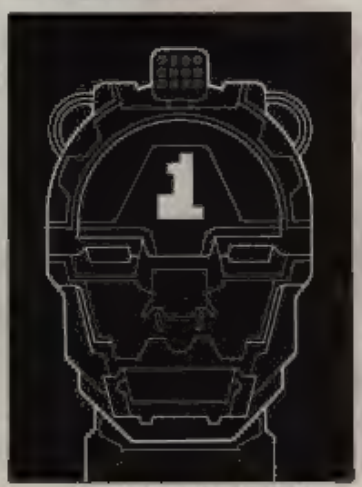

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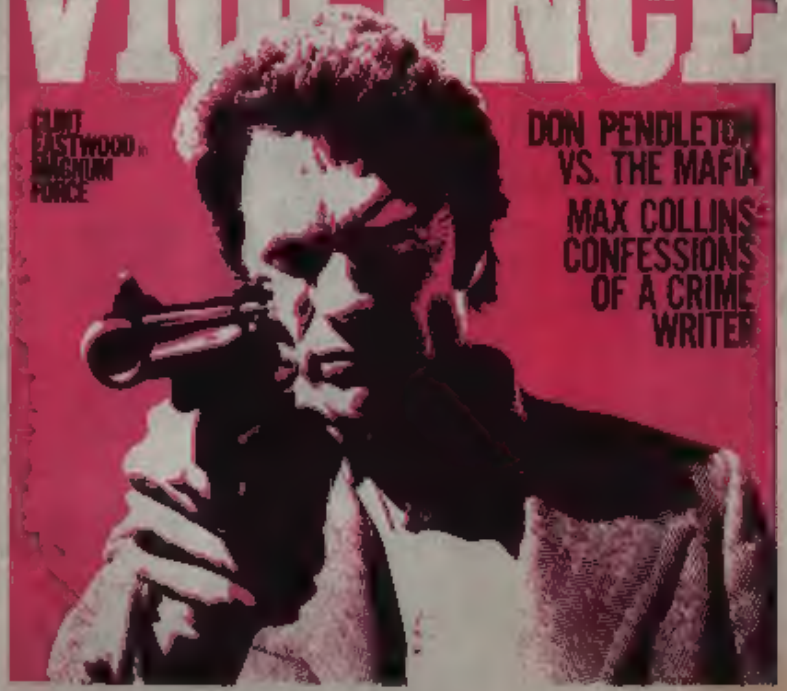

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